A FURTHER GARDEN:

THE GENTLEMAN IDEAL IN SOUTHERN FICTION, 1894-1904

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Dr. Robert Regan, my mentor in the English Department of the University of Pennsylvania. I am deeply indebted to his encouragement and expert advice.

ABSTRACT

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At the end of the nineteenth century, fictional portraits of the antebellum South as a lost Arcady, a place where honorable gentlemen, charming belles, and happy black "servants" lived in splendid isolation from the struggle for wealth and status in more commercial societies, enjoyed a widespread popularity. At the same time, apostles of a new order emerged, proclaiming the death of the Old South and the birth of a progressive, industrialized South. The new Southerner, they claimed, regarded work no longer as a necessary evil but indeed as man's primary avenue toward self-fulfillment. The difficulties of reconciling the South's mythic past and its future as a capitalist market society form the central subject of five novels published between 1894 and 1904. Thomas Nelson Page's Red Rock (1898) and Gordon Keith (1903), George Washington Cable's John March, Southerner (1894), and Ellen Glasgow's The Battle-Ground (1902) and The Deliverance (1904) attempt to redefine the meaning of gentlemanliness in the context of the social changes heralded by the ideologies of the New South. In antebellum southern society, the gentleman, as described in numerous romances, had become a tremendously influential model of masculinity for white southerners. Writing in the wake of the social upheaval caused by the lost Civil War and Radical Reconstruction, the novelists Page, Cable, and Glasgow ask whether or not the southern gentleman can or should survive as a model for future generations. Underlying the writers' consideration of gentlemanliness, traditional gender roles within the plantation household, and the social functions of labor is one fundamental question:

"Can gentlemen exist without slaves?" The answers provided in these texts shed an interesting light not only on southern society at the end of the nineteenth century but also on the work of some among the more highly acclaimed southern writers of the twentieth century, most notably William Faulkner, Robert Penn Warren, and Walker Percy.

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Abbreviations

BG	Ellen Glasgow, The Battle-Ground (Burt, 1902)
D	Ellen Glasgow, The Deliverance: A Romance of the Virginia Tobacco Fields (Doubleday, 1904)
GK	Thomas Nelson Page, Gordon Keith (Scribner's, 1903)
JMS	George Washington Cable, John March, Southerner (Scribner's, 1894)
RR	Thomas Nelson Page, Red Rock: A Chronicle of Reconstruction (Scribner's, 1898)

ONE: The Gentleman Ideal and Southern Fiction

By the late 1880's, the South's injured honor appeared to have made a complete recovery from the shock of Appomattox. The Confederacy Lee's armies had unsuccessfully defended rose again in the pages of fiction, and its ghost entered the dreamlife of the victorious enemy. Stories set in the old plantation South, among chivalrous gentlemen, coyly coquettish belles, and happy "darkies," appeared regularly in every major Northern magazine. Thomas Nelson Page, William Chandler Harris, F. Hopkinson Smith, and scores of others popularized Southern local color stories, published first in serialization and later in bookform; John Esten Cooke's post-war books continued to attract audiences, and even the novels of William Gilmore Simms experienced a kind of revival in the 1880's. At the end of the decade, Albion Tourgee found that "American fiction to-day, whatever its origin, is predominantly Southern in type and character" as well as "distinctly Confederate in sympathy" (qtd. in Woodward 165).

The phenomenal outburst of literary activity in the South between 1880 and 1900 and the popular success of magnolia scented romances can be explained in part by what C. Van Woodward has called a "freakishly romantic turn of the Northern fancy" (165) as well as by a more persistent fascination of the American middle classes with aristocratic glamour, especially whenever "a significant degree of doubt and anxiety . . . attends the triumphs of democratic egalitarianism" (Watson 12). The moment for the

plantation image to step out of the shadow cast by Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin in the 1850's was propitious. In the intervening years, the moral outrage over slavery had lost much of its fervor. Many Northerners, as Kenneth Stampp points out, had "tired of the worn out cry of 'southern outrages'" and felt that the issue itself had been settled by the war (15). Furthermore, during the final two decades of the century, a national consensus had begun to form according to which Radical Reconstruction programs had been a dismal mistake. This disillusionment, Stanley Elkins explains, "chastened the moral ruthlessness in the North that had carried the antislavery standard into battle." For the first time since North and South separated over slavery, the South now had "at least a reciprocal claim on the Northern conscience," and thus the "old-time abolitionist who had wept over UncleTom's Cabin in his youth could sit shedding furtive tears over 'Marse Chan'" (Elkins 5).

Elkins describes what took place during these years between the end of Reconstruction and World War I as "a staking out of neutral ground upon which fraternal sentiments might again mingle" (5). Southern writers contributed to this process by acquiescing to the taste of their Northern audiences for a genteel literature of ideality and romantic escape, and Northerners implicitly acquiesced to the perpetuation of the South's dominant culture and its most cherished literary self-representations.

But the market for a romanticized Old South and for reconciliation plots in which gallant Union officers marry charming plantation belles after the end of the war was fed by more than the desire to heal old wounds alone. New anxieties, shaped by rapidly increasing foreign immigration during the century's final two decades, attended the popular success of serialized romances such as Page's Red Rock, which glorifies Southern resistance to Reconstruction as a fight to "preserve the civilization of the Anglo-Saxon" against the "greatest humiliation of modern times" - the rule of slaves

over their former masters (RR viii). Red Rock appeared in bookform in 1898 and sold over 100,000 copies during its first year (Bargainnier 44); in 1894, on the other hand, George Washington Cable's John March,Southerner, a novel that is trenchantly critical of the planter oligarchy while it portrays Southern blacks and foreign immigrants with distinct sympathy, had met with as much indifference as the impassioned indictments of racism its author had delivered from the lecture platform for years.

In the early 1890's, the United States had only begun to enter the final stage of a historical process in which the Civil War did not figure as the pivotal event. Before 1843, the nation had been predominantly rural, pre-modern, and pre-industrial. By the end of what Herbert G. Gutman calls the "Middle Period" (1843-1893) in America's emergence as a mature international commercial power, industrialization had forced changes upon practically every aspect of the country's social fabric, and still "a profound tension existed between the older American pre-industrial social structure and the modernizing institutions that accompanied the development of industrial capitalism" (Gutman 127). It is thus not alone to the wounds of the bloody war and "war's bastard offspring," as Page had branded Reconstruction in Red Rock, that fantasies of a pastoral life in the radiant old days of the South applied a "definite soothing salve" (Henry James qtd. in Woodward 157). David Bertelson takes the popularity of romantic plantation literature as a sign that "questions were being asked throughout the nation concerning the meaning of work in an environment of factories and huge corporations" (237).

As a byproduct in the development of capitalist production during the nineteenth century, much of the North-East had already entered a period from which American society is only now emerging. For the first time, work had become virtually synonymous with employment, or income generation, and households were becoming increasingly "dependent on a male chief earner, who was, in theory, paid a family

wage." The notion that only remunerated labor qualifies as work and that "one should obtain most, if not all, one's material wants as a consumer by spending money gained through employment" had not developed apace in the antebellum South (Pahl 12). In the plantation household, where most work was unremunerated and performed by men and women alike, the segregation of life into a part devoted to work, that is socially purposeful and rewarded activity, and another devoted to play, or purely private activity without measurable value for society, had been defined far less sharply.

In 1838, John C.Calhoun had described Southern civilization with a peculiar double vision as both highly individualistic and fundamentally social: "The Southern States are an aggregate, in fact, of communities, not of individuals. Every plantation is a little community. . . . These small communities aggregated make the State in all" (19). Plantations were independent "worlds unto themselves," but at the same time they were also interrelated through a network of social codes into a definable Southern civilization (Genovese 127). In a synechdotal relationship, one plantation community could stand for the essential character of the whole civilization; and since the individual plantation household was an agricultural enterprise that produced primarily not for the market but to satisfy its own needs, defenders of the plantation ideal found it easy to emphasize the advantages the unfree laborer in this community enjoyed over the free laborer in industrial societies, who "is compelled by social conditions to sell the whole of his active life, his very capacity for work, for the price of the necessaries of life" (Pahl 12).

The image dispersed in scores of neo-plantation *apologiae*, which began to appear in increasing numbers especially after the publication of Uncle Tom's Cabin in 1851 (Parrington 97-103), contained, as Eugene Genovese puts it, "a good deal more 'ought' than 'is'" (126). But at a time when America was embracing irrevocably the "mechanized life of modern industrial capitalism," the Old South emerged as a

convenient myth of an "organic society" situated in the re-united nation's nostalgic dreamlife, a long misunderstood pre-capitalist and pre-bourgeois outpost of the American pastoral promise (Eagleton 36). That the plantation South had in fact been pre-capitalist and pre-bourgeois in at best a limited sense and that it could not have existed as a plantation society in the first place without its deep involvement in the capitalist world market are truths that historical scholarship has only in recent years endeavored to recover painstakingly and in constant conflict with the still seductive allure of the romantic myth (Fox-Genovese 55).

As with all truly organic societies, the Old South, the "good ole times" Page's black narrator, Sam, recalls in "Marse Chan," had to be dead before it could come to life (In OleVirginia 13). "They were creating," James Branch Cabell said of his contemporaries, "in the same instant that they lamented the Old South's extinction, an Old South which had died proudly at Appomattox, without ever having been smirched by the wear and tear of existence" (145). The nostalgic backward glance to a life that had possessed a now lost relatedness and grace is nothing new in nineteenth century Southern fiction. Page's Sam, for example, has a predecessor in John Pendleton Kennedy's Swallow Barn (1831), generally acknowledged to be the first plantation novel, where Scipio, Squire Meriwether's faithful retainer, recalls with longing the "'palmy days' of Virginia" before many of the Tidewater aristocrats had begun their migration westward (22).

The latest Old South was by and large the invention of individuals who had committed themselves to the creation of a new one, a gilded South, modelled closely upon the example of the former enemy. Yet in the rallying cry of a New South created in the image of the North-East, as it was usually uttered in one breath with hymns of praise for the perfect society that once had been, the accent fell emphatically on a spot

somewhere between the adjective and the noun. "The New South," Thomas Nelson Page wrote to William Hamilton Hayne in 1887, "is in my judgement merely the Old South with Slavery gone and the fire of exaction on its back" (Holman 67). To fight that fire, the South needed economic power; to gain that power it needed to embrace frugality, thrift, duty, and work - virtues the plantation South had always regarded lightly.

The spirit of the New South is memorably captured in a scene C. Vann Woodward describes in his Origins of the New South (1951):

> At dawn on Sunday, May 30, 1886, the Louisville and Nashville . . . had an army of 8,000 men poised along its 2,000 miles of rails, armed with sledge hammer and crowbar and fired with zeal. By sundown their heroic labors had shifted the west rail three inches east along the whole 2,000 miles and adjusted the iron wheels of 300 locomotives and 10,000 pieces of rolling stock to conform with the "standard."
>
> (123-4)

Nothing could be more contradictory to the image of the Old South as a civilization characterized by freedom from if not aversion to labour than the "strain and sweat of that desecrated Sabbath" (124).

The effects of the standardization were visible to many observers. On a homecoming journey down the Mississippi in the 1880's, Samuel Clemens noted two businessmen, one from Cincinnati, the other from New Orleans, who were practically indistinguishable from each other because both were brothers in the same spirit of progress and commerce: "Brisk men, energetic of movement and speech; the dollar their god, how to get it their religion"(Life on the Mississippi 328). And in 1889, Charles Dudley Warner remarked: "Society becomes yearly more and more alike North and

South," making it impossible to tell Southern ladies and gentlemen apart from their Northern counterparts "by physiogomy, dress or manner" (qtd. in Woodward 149).

Henry Woodfin Grady, the leading spokesman for the progressive, "standardized" South, traveled north to New York in 1886 and proclaimed: "We have sowed towns and cities in the places of theories and put business above politics. . . . We have established thrift in city and country. We have fallen in love with work." Later in the same address he described the New South as "a social system compact and closely knitted, less splendid on the surface but stronger at the core - a hundred farms for every plantation, fifty homes for every palace, and a diversified industry that meets the complex needs of this complex age" (qtd. in Bertelson 237). This new topography, the product of a radically revisionist attitude on the part of the Southerners for whom Grady sees himself speaking, nevertheless not only affirms groundbreaking changes in the South's image, it also confirms a remarkable continuity. Grady's picture of the New South defines, even as it announces its death, the legend of the Old South, and each phrase in his pronouncement recalls the legendary planter gentleman - concrete plans for urbanization of the South (to replace his lack of talent for all practical matters), "business above politics" (to replace his predilection for theorizing discourse and his extravagant addiction to flamboyant rhetoric), "thrift in city and country" (to replace his proverbial inclination toward prodigality). Above all, Grady promises that the New South has reformed its attitude toward work - gone are the days when gentlemen devoted their lives to the pursuit of leisure.

During the late nineteenth century, a dual consciousness of a need for change and a resistance to change, an inability to "abandon the patterns of the Old South or to forego the material gains of modern America," defined what C. Vann Woodward has dubbed the "divided mind" of the South (Gaston 8). Samuel Clemens responded to the mix of

old ideals and new goals with considerable distaste and impatience. The commingling of "practical common sense, progressive ideas, and progressive works" with "the duel, the inflated speech, and the jejune romanticism of an absurd past that is dead, and out of charity ought to be buried," he saw as evidence of residual effects of "Sir Walter [Scott] disease," the remainder of "sham grandeurs, sham gauds, and sham chivalries" not yet overcome by the "wave of progress" (Life on the Mississippi 375). Clemens satirized the new Southerner, who has learned that "time is money" but can not shake the romantic ghosts of the past, in his Tom Sawyer. But if in fact Southerners of the 1880's and 1890's were trying to live with what was, according to Richard Gray, a "cultural schizophrenia" (38), an unresolved tension between "dedication to progress and loyalty to the often stultifying traditions and myths of the past," it must be remembered that this was not the first time the South had attempted to embrace two divergent ideals (Watson 219).

As in any other society, European civilization in the American South has always managed to adjust itself to changes dictated by new realities. In the South these adjustments have perhaps been slower and attended by a more insistent need to keep in touch with the past than has been the case elsewhere in the United States, but as Southern society changed, so did its ideals and the forms in which its cultural aspirations found expression. One such form is the Southern gentleman, the South's concept of the *kalos-kagathos*, the "well-bred man," as distinguished from the *banausos*, the vulgar and uncultured (Loewith 205). This figure, derived from pre-Christian traditions, filtered through stages in the development of European civilizations, and imported and adapted on the American continent, had symbolized a cultural schizophrenia since long before the emergence of a New South. The gentleman of the 1890's, in dress and manner indistinguishable from the antebellum Cavalier planter, in

spirit and ambition the equal of any Yankee businessman, is merely the embodiment of an old conflict in a new disguise.

R. Lyn Rainard has pointed out that "two contradictory traditions influenced the development of the ideal man in America" in the colonial period. One was the English concept of the gentleman, adapted from the Italian ideal presented in Castiglione's The Book of the Courtier; the other was produced by the conditions of life on the American frontier. The former stressed the values of refined European civilization and required of the ideal man the virtues of superior birth, cultivation, and manners; the other, making virtues of the necessities conditioned by life on the wilderness frontier, emphasized natural simplicity and freedom from the "degenerative influence of European civilization" (298). Southerners, Rainard argues, to a higher degree than colonists elsewhere in the future United States, embraced both concepts and tried to conflate both sets of values into one ideal. Corroborative evidence for Rainard's argument is provided by Anette Kolodny, who, citing Leo Marx's discussion of Robert Beverly's The Historie and Present State of Virginia (1705), finds traces of that search in Beverly's attempt to reconcile his "admiration for the primitive life with what he knew of the needs of a truly civilized community" (Kolodny 15). According to Marx, Beverly "was looking for a conception of life which would combine . . . the Indians' high level of instinctual gratification with those refinements of civilization based on performance - work - hence a degree of repression" (Marx 87).

Rainard identifies as the final attempt by a Southerner to fuse the two ideals into a single literary model William Wirt's Sketches of the Life and Character of Patrick Henry (1817). Wirt's biography presents Patrick Henry as a natural yet accomplished gentleman, simple but able to move with ease in the most sophisticated social circles; above all, Wirt's Henry is a complete man, who embodies definitively "all the values

and aspirations of a society" (Rainard 301). Rainard argues that after Wirt's attempt "to provide the South with a grand design of a single ideal type," Southern writers chose instead to represent the two sets of virtues in two different characters (300-1). The figures William R. Taylor has identified as two conflicting types of Southerners represented in antebellum fiction, the "Cavalier," cultured, honorable, courageous, on the one hand, and, on the other, the "Transcendent Yankee," simpler, more practical, though often materialistic and unpolished, are therefore to be seen as complementary types instead (Taylor 84). Kennedy's Sergeant Galbraith Robinson in Horse-Shoe Robinson, as well as Joe "Red" Jarvis in Caruthers' The Knights of the Golden Horseshoe and Sergeant Millhouse in Simms' Woodcraft embody virtues that the debate over slavery had rendered difficult to incorporate into a single model of Southern gentlemanliness. The "transcedent Yankee" is characterized by frugality, thrift, and a capacity for hard work. But by 1832 (the year Kennedy published SwallowBarn) at the latest, the South's dominant literary culture had abandoned the Jeffersonian ideal of freeholding, hard-working yeomen and concentrated instead on emphasizing the "beauty of harmonious social relations" in lavish plantation gardens where slaves were not worked under the whip (Smith 151). Into the foreground moved the virtues of the Cavalier type: liberality, hospitality, and a serene indifference to material ambition. The Cavalier came to be seen as a function of Southern distinctiveness from the "Puritan" North and its "leveling, go-getting utilitarian" mentality (Taylor xv).

Behind the two contrasting conceptions of the ideal man stand two contrasting philosophical views of work. One, represented by "Horse-Shoe" Robinson, "Red" Jarvis, and Sergeant Millhouse, who are all closely identified with a particular skill in which they excel, regards work as "social productive labour" that is "man's essential activity (and woman's too) and, potentially at least, the main avenue to human self-

development and fulfillment." The other regards work primarily as "painful exertion and the deferral of gratification"; we undertake it only because we have to in order to satisfy our basic needs or because some overriding ambition drives us to it. The ideal life, according to this "hedonistic" view of human nature, would be one of "luxurious indolence" and resembles rather closely the life of the legendary Cavalier: "No laborious occupation required; no tillage, no navigation. Music, poetry, and contemplation form his sole business: conversation, mirth and friendship his sole amusement" (Sayers 722-3). In theory, the Southern plantation constituted an ideal accomodation of both views. It had provided for the (racially defined) needs of a workforce requiring coercion to overcome its natural reluctance to engage in "social productive labor" as an avenue to fulfillment. It also provided for the (again, racially defined) right of others to seek self-development without the painful exertion of labor.

The literary plantation image that supports this perspective is composed of numerous symbolic relationships, each of which enacts the resolution Beverley and others had sought, between simplicity and refinement, a "high level of instinctual gratification" and "a degree of repression." The typical plantation landscape itself embodies this conjunction. In his classic study of plantation literature, Francis Pendleton Gaines observes that the setting conventionally features an image of "central splendour flanked by picturesqueness," commodious cultivated grounds surrounded by dense vegetation (12). The plantation is an artifice in the wilderness, a space cleared for and by the performance of work yet situated on a permanent American frontier, signifying a space as yet untouched by work. Its place is in the wilderness but not of the wilderness. As invariably as the setting for a Flannery O'Connor short story includes her signature line of dark trees bordering the horizon of her modern fallen

world, the cultivated plantation garden is surrounded by and situated within a pre-lapsarian Eden.

This romantic dreamscape, which Gaines found in the popular plantation literature around the turn of the twentieth century, has its antetype in the very first plantation built in the American South and in what might with some justification be called the first American plantation novel, Captain John Smith's account of the settlement at Jamestown in Book III of his Generall Historie.

Smith, dismayed that the new world did not readily fulfill the promise of wealth without toil accounts written by earlier travelers had held out (Quinn; Davis 3-13), erected palisades around Jamestown as a concrete borderline, a definitive frontier, between the values of European civilization within and the unstructured wilderness without. In Smith's opinion this separation had become necessary not only because marauding Indians threatened the safety of his colonists but also because the colonists themselves, some of whom refused to labor for the satisfaction of communal need, instead preferring to roam the forest in search of easy wealth, were quickly becoming indistinguishable from the "improvident savages." Smith created a kind of reversed Eden; only those who worked to supply the needs of the entire community were permitted to live inside the walls. Those who would not work were banned to the wilderness outside (Barbour 185, 214). Jamestown derives its identity from a tension that is symbolized by the wall. It is defined as much by the solid structures the wall includes, the huts, the tools, the weapons, the division of tasks and fulfillment of duties, as it is by the unstructured potential, the natural abundance awaiting commodification it was built to exclude. The wall suggests a control of aggression and a controlled aggression, a control, in other words, that works both ways, against the potential embodied by the wilderness and against the impulse to seek an immediate realization of

that potential. The palisades were erected as much to keep the colonists in as they were to keep the Indians out.

Captain Smith's wall is still visible at the core of the romantic myth Gaines surveyed in 1924. The two most popular characters among the stock types who inhabit the conventional plantation scene in late nineteenth and early twentieth century literature embody the same tension between fulfillment and potential, completion and latency, immoderacy and repression. The ideal of masculinity is represented in the "Old Planter," symbol of mature manhood and restrained aggression. Next to him stands his exact opposite, his young daughter or ward, dressed in "a big thing with furbelows within which the dainty bit of humanity appears a mere wisp," the very personification of potential resisting fulfillment. The typical young belle is, according to Gaines, "bewitching in coquetry yet strangely steadfast in soul," a true "Steel Magnolia" in other words. The old gentleman himself is "an embodiment of inconsistencies, not to say contradictions," at once hospitable, courteous, easy of manners, self-content, and honorable as well as hot tempered, profane, intemperate, intolerant, obstinate, and unchaste (Gaines 15).

In the modern sense of the terms, Smith's wall had separated the territories of work and play. Like Smith's Jamestown, the Southern plantations evoked in scores of short stories, romances, stage plays, and early motion pictures are situated on a frontier between easeful regression and socially purposeful activity or work. Smith's wall is still visible, if only because romantic mythmakers tried so thoroughly to obscure its presence. Descriptions of the ante-bellum plantation inevitably emphasize the presence of tools and the sounds of labor. But while signs of work are in evidence everywhere, rarely does the picture include an individual worker engaged in an individually identifiable task. Work is seen as a part of the place's overall atmosphere, much as the

"great house," the slave quarters, the gardens, the fields, and the cotton that is, as Gaines noted, usually shown in the open boll state, ready for picking and permanently frozen into the moment between its natural state and its conversion into commodity value (Gaines 14). Individual workers might have their special skills but none is identified with or by this skill. Work is purely social; slaves at work in the fields are usually shown in the distance, as a group, or more frequently even not seen but only heard, singing while they work.

If the slave's work shades into play, the opposite is true for the white members of the household. The typical setting in which the life of the plantation whites is dramatized is a social occasion, a wedding, a ball, an all day dinner party, Christmas festivities, hunts, or tournaments. And yet, because the "ubiquity of mirth," as Gaines put it, is channelled into predictable patterns by the strictest rituals of conduct, what may look like pure play takes on a definable social value and begins to approximate a sense of work (Gaines 14). Since these demonstrations of hospitality forged the visible links in the "aggregate" of plantation communities that made up Southern society as a whole, they served a vital social purpose and thus transcended the purely private sphere (Bertelson 65).

If these rituals of celebration served to connect the individual community to the network outside it on specific occasions, the gentleman planter's function was to represent that link at all other times. Unlike men in bourgeois capitalist societies, the gentleman in the plantation society was not defined by his occupational identity, by what he did for a living, but by his fulfillment of the demands made by an agreed upon code of behavior that subjected all aspects of individual self-realization to a form of repression.

If leisure "in our modern world of labor, business, and industry, has become mere laziness," as Karl Loewith said, the potential for that misidentification has always been a concern for the defenders of the plantation model (210). Daniel Hundley's Social Relations in Our Southern States (1860) includes a definitive portrait of the "Southern Gentleman" according to the prevailing myth. Hundley seems to be conscious of two contrasting tendencies against which his ideal is set off. On the one hand, he dwells extensively on the gentleman's autonomy. What the gentleman does for a living never defines who he is, nor does his occupational identity exist in a separate sphere of his life from the one where he is truly himself. On the other hand, Hundley is studious to avoid implications that this autonomy is merely a form of self-indulgence. The gentleman is never really at work, if we take work to mean an activity undertaken exclusively for the sake of a social reward, and he is never really at play, if we understand play to be an activity without measurable benefit for society. The gentleman's happiness proceeds in a kind of aggregate beyond himself to his family, black and white, and to the world beyond.

> It would seem, and so indeed it is, as a rule, that the Southern Gentleman, even the most assiduous in business, labors only for occupation, or *pour passer le temps*, his daily toil being his daily pleasure; and not, as in busier and more money-getting communities, a painful drudgery, submitted to but for the sake of a scarcely understood good beyond. He never buries the man in the business, but makes of his business itself his social enjoyment and his true life. Thus, whatever may be his engagements, he seems never to have anything to do but to amuse himself and his family and the stranger within his gates. (58)

Throughout this chapter, Hundley emphasizes the gentleman's indifference to the "good beyond." Yet in the same pages emerges an equal if not greater anxiety to draw a

line between this freedom from "painful drudgery" and indolence, purposelessness, and complete lack of structure. Though a gentleman "never seems to have anything to do," he is in fact always doing something. And if his business does not define his life, Hundley leaves no doubt that the gentleman's life is filled with busyness. The difficulty Hundley encountered lay in presenting gentlemanly leisure as somehow convincingly socially purposeful and structured. On occasion, Hundley's efforts to wrench a social benefit from the gentleman's occupations *pour passer le temps* approach the absurd. He explains that "sometimes a bear has to be looked for, and now and then the alligators require some setting down" (emphasis mine), and explains in detail which dangers might arise should the reptiles remain at large (59).

Not surprisingly, Hundley's portrait of the typical antebellum planter gentleman does not differ essentially from the corresponding image Gaines saw represented in popular literature. The Southern gentleman as portrayed in romantic fiction, on the stage, and on the screen is outwardly soft and relaxed, even indulgent, but never far below that surface is an unmistakable capacity for physical exertion and possibly for violence. The stereotypical plantation "darky," on the other hand, is a carbon copy of his master - "loves watermelon, carries razor" - outwardly harmless but always potentially dangerous (Gaines 17).

The character of the gentleman, as described in Hundley's "authentic" account and in Gaines' summary of the popularized version, is made up of a nearly unlimited potential for and an equally great indifference to purposive action.

The danger of meaninglessness implicit in the realization of the ideal was as present to Hundley as it was to antebellum writers who had used the "Southern Hamlet" and the "Southern Hotspur," as William R. Taylor calls them, to caution gentlemen against falling into either extreme. The Hamlet, in whom "the well springs of action

have somehow dried up," represents an excess of indifference, and the Hotspur a dangerous lack of the same quality (Taylor 137-8). If antebellum romancers found it difficult to fashion literary representations of the ideal man, the whole man who holds both tendencies in perfect balance, it may be because the ideal condition of never having "anything to do" is barely distinguishable from its total opposite. If the slave was denied access to a sense of individuality through his work, so had to be his master. In his reading of planters' journals, which included minute records of daily activities, David Bertelson noted recurring stories of punishments dealt out to slaves who had followed their "natural" inclination toward indolence (109-10, 115). Bertelson speculates that the slaveowners had to think of their slaves as either potentially lazy or potentially violent to avoid facing the inconsequentiality of their own lives. The presence of the slave thus not only enabled the gentleman's detachment from the pursuit of "a good beyond," it also provided a necessary purpose for his busyness.

It is ultimately not meaningful to speak of the gentleman ideal in the South, as distinguishable from the same ideal in other western civilizations, in isolation from the plantation setting and the slave work-force. The pastoral dream in America, as Annette Kolodny remarked, has always been more than a "habit of mind"; it has also been "a habit of action" (16). Not until the turn of the twentieth century did a number of white Southern writers openly acknowledge that the gentleman could avoid alienating any part of himself into the product of his work only because the slave became himself a product. The gentleman escaped the confusion of self and market value by reducing the slave to nothing but market value.

Elizabeth Fox-Genovese has shown how deeply the identity of the "Southern Lady" was bound up with the presence of her "servants" in the antebellum plantation household. The same can be said of the gentleman. Neither was merely someone "who

happened to be more affluent than others" (202). Gentlemanliness was more than an abstraction of ideal manhood; it was primarily a social role for a society whose "essential character derived from the master-slave relation - from slavery as a social system - which shaped the culture, intellectual life, and politics of the slaveholders in particular and the society in general" (Fox-Genovese 55). The abolition of slavery, the lost Civil War, the humiliation of Reconstruction, or the various creeds of the New South decidedly did not precipitate the South overnight from the Middle Ages into modern world capitalism. The plantation South had long been dependent on the capitalist world market; the involvement of the plantation economy in the marketplace has no part in the "organic society" nostalgically evoked by late-century romancers who portray the Old South as having been isolated from the progress of capitalism and somehow frozen into the stage of an earlier European feudalism. But even though the Old South was not in any practical sense an island removed from the stream of "universal progress," as it is characterized by Thomas Nelson Page in Red Rock, it had been unique, neither a "copy or recreation of precapitalist European society out of which it, like the North, had grown" nor an essentially bourgeois society the North and western Europe were becoming during the nineteenth century (Fox-Genovese 55). While the North and the rest of the capitalist world had repudiated unfree labor, the South had "embraced slavery as the foundation of its social relations and, in so doing, established massive barriers to the penetration of capitalism into southern life and institutions" (Fox-Genovese 54). Since the eighteenth century and even more so after the Revolution, the South had developed, as Fox-Genovese calls it, a "hybrid or bifurcated character that resulted from the tension between its foundations in slave labor and its membership both in a democratic republic and a capitalist world market" (54-55). The South had a market

economy without becoming at the same time a market society (Genovese 125); it was "in but not of the bourgeois world" (Fox-Genovese 55).

For some historians, the Civil War era marks a sharp borderline, separating one kind of South from another. For others, the period represents a temporary disruption in overall continuity. The emphasis on a dramatic border crossing has generally served the conservative ideological purpose of evoking a mythical whole and harmonious organic society, somewhere on the other side of the line, whose privileged detachment from the present offers a convenient point of reference from which to bemoan the disjunctions of modern life. To what extend the New South that included "sharecropping and liens, segregation and militant white supremacy" was indeed "new" continues to be a subject for debate (Roark 208). But "with slavery gone and the fire of exaction on its back," the South needed to find the answers to questions about its fundamental social relations.

After the turbulence of war and Reconstruction, this debate appears to have been carried out in social, political, and cultural arenas the South's literary establishment declined to enter. The contributions Southern writers made during the post-war years to a dialogue about the region's vital questions are not immediately evident. Some scholars have come to consider the years from 1890-1920 "the forgotten decades and the dark night of Southern literature," a period characterized by uncritical acceptance of a popular demand for sentimental romance (Mixon, "Humor, Romance, and Realism" 246). Southern writers looked to the past and conformed with inherited literary traditions and conventions, heightened the sentimentality of plantation fiction, and even lost the capacity for the mildly ironic detachment that characterizes Kennedy's Swallow Barn or John Esten Cooke's TheVirginia Comedians (1854). Because they were either unable or unwilling to forego the allure of the literary marketplace, Southern writers did not develop innovative forms and failed to treat the life of their age and region with

thoroughgoing realism. Whether the cause of this inadequacy lies in a constitutional weakness of the writers themselves, who could not or would not do as Herman Melville had done and earn money in other ways to write what pleased only himself, or in an audience, composed primarily of Northerners and women, that mindlessly craved sentimental love stories with happy endings, Southern fiction remained a thing apart from the mainstream of the great American literary tradition until the 1920's. By then, as Louis D. Rubin remarks, "the young writer of vision and integrity was by nature removed from the temptation of popularity." William Faulkner could "shovel coal in a power plant at night and write As I Lay Dying during the day" without giving a thought to the concern about whether or not his book would appeal to his Mississippi neighbours or a housewife in New England (131-2).

Guided by the premises that "vision and integrity" are irreconcilable with "popularity" and that artistic merit is a function of the degree to which a work of art manages to transcend the limitations of its historical situation, scholars of Southern literature have more often than not approached the period before 1920 with a selective eye to individual texts and exceptional authors whose work can be said in some way to "anticipate" the liberation of Southern fiction from melodrama and conventionality during the post-World War I renascence. Thus Thomas Nelson Page's Red Rock (1898) and Gordon Keith (1903), George Washington Cable's John March, Southerner (1895), and Ellen Glasgow's TheBattle-Ground (1902) and The Deliverance (1904) have only infrequently been given the critical attention merited by "serious literature," although one of the most often cited distinguishing features of modern Southern fiction, its peculiar consciousness of "the past in the present," is nowhere more strongly in evidence than at the turn of the century in these narratives about the decline of the antebellum plantation order (Tate "The New Provincialism" 331).

According to many accounts, the first modern novel written by a Southerner was Huckleberry Finn. What makes it so, as explained by Allen Tate, is its narrative "mode of progression," which follows a "dialectical" rather than the traditional Southern "rhetorical" pattern of discourse. In the "dialectical mode," the narrative's action "is generated inside the characters: there is internal dialogue, a conflict within the self." It facilitates "a give and take between two minds," whereas the "rhetorical mode" presupposes a passive audience, "somebody at the other end silently listening" to a speaker, or "rhetor," reporting "an argument or an action in which he is not dramatically involved" ("A Southern Mode of the Imagination" 560-7).

It is worth pointing out that Allen Tate's theory of novelistic dicourse resembles, at least at a general level, Mikhail Bakhtin's distinction between "linear" and "pictural" styles (Todorov 68-70), or styles of the "First Line" and styles of the "Second Line" in the history of the European novel (Bakhtin 375). Accordingly, novels belonging to the "rhetorical mode" fall into the "First Line," as they leave heteroglossia outside of the text, are dominated by unmediated authorial discourse, and thus remain "single-voiced" and stylistically monolithic; novels belonging to the "dialectical mode," on the other hand, incorporate heteroglossia directly into their composition and become "double-voiced," resisting "unmediated and pure authorial discourse" (Bakhtin 375).

The shift from a "rhetorical" to a "dialectical" mode of discourse, which was first exemplified in Southern fiction by Mark Twain and then later rediscovered by Southern novelists of the twentieth century, can be examined closely and in relatively distinctive developmental stages between Page's Red Rock on one end of the scale and Glasgow's The Deliverance on the other. All three authors - Page, Cable, and Glasgow - interpret in the form of narrative fiction the same chapter in Southern history - the destruction of the old "organic society" by war, by the invasion of carpetbaggers, and by the

materialism of the emerging New South. The differences between the ways in which each encodes the meaning of recent historical events can be concretized in terms of Tate's theory of modes as the gradual dissolution of the "rhetor's" authoritative point-of-view and the internalization of narrative action or conflict. But more importantly these differences reflect a dramatic change in the role the gentleman ideal plays in Southern literature and culture.

One would be hardpressed to find a better example of the "rhetorical mode" than Page's bestselling Red Rock. For most modern readers, Red Rock epitomizes irredeemably bad literature. Its plot lacks the dramatic coherence of events unfolding according to Aristotelean standards of probability; instead, Page gives us an apparently pointless proliferation of incident, connected loosely by progressive stages in an inverted mystery concerning a stolen land bond and a complicated love story that operates on the same principle - the reader already knows most of the truth before the hero uncovers it. In fact, the plot is so predictable that at least one reader has come to consider it "the least significant element of the story" (Gross 89). All characters lack psychological depth. They seem to be "products of an environment rather than people with individual emotions or spontaneous ideas" (MacKethan 52). The term "gentleman," in particular, assumes almost soteriological significance. Characters are either "saved" or "damned" according to whether or not they understand and accept the gentlemanly code of honor. In the typical fashion of a late century reconciliation novel, Yankees and Southerners, blacks and whites, are grouped on both sides of the line; but all women, regardless of race, class, or geographic origin, end up among the virtuous.

Red Rock had been Page's first novel-length treatment of the period between the last years of the old plantation order and the end of Reconstruction. In his second, he returned to the same time period, but Gordon Keith is most usefully regarded as a

thematic sequel to Red Rock. Keith, the title hero, is a plantation-bred Virginia gentleman who carries the glorious redemption of the South from the carpetbagger regimes, with which Red Rock concludes, into its next stage. Like his creator, who had pledged himself to an equal "devotion for the South" and "pride in the Union," Keith is a representative exponent of the New South's "divided mind," firmly committed to his family's Cavalier past and equally dedicated to the commercial exploitation of his homeland's natural resources (In Ole Virginia xi). With this, his most autobiographical novel, Page furthermore appears to resume William Wirt's quest for a model of gentlemanliness to embrace the often contradictory values of the entire reunited nation. Gordon Keith is a calculated effort to write an American novel, not a Southern one, and its hero is to be seen as the model of an American gentleman, a curious mixture between the blue-blooded Cavalier and the practical self-made man.

A little over a decade before the publication of Page's Gordon Keith, George Washington Cable had begun his work on what was to have been his most comprehensive novel about Southern society, a social satire that challenged the organic myth and portrayed the gentleman as an insipid idealist, an unworldly romantic, unable to free himself from the stranglehold of traditions that sapped strength and vitality from his character. In The Grandissimes (1880), set in New Orleans shortly after the Louisiana Purchase, and in Dr. Sevier (1884), set in the same city around 1860, Cable had partially veiled his attack on the South's worship of caste and class behind the picturesque antebellum setting and soft-spoken Creoles, but John March,Southerner, or Johnny Reb, as Cable had titled the original draft, takes place in the mythical state of "Dixie" after the Civil War. In contrast with Page's portrait of the South as a pastoral alternative to the urbanized, industrialized North, Cable draws a decidedly unpleasant

picture of "Dixie," a region brought to ruin by the corruption, small-mindedness, and lack of moral strength exhibited by its inhabitants.

Cable's determination to add, as Wayne Mixon writes, "a touch of bitters to the saccharine brew of the literary Plantation Tradition" remained largely unappreciated until the mid-twentieth century, when the renascence in the South was well underway and scholars like Arlin Turner and Louis D. Rubin began to identify elements of pre-Faulknerian realism in Cable's critical attitude toward the moral character of the Southern gentry. That same quality, however, is what Richard Watson Gilder, Cable's longtime editor at the Century Magazine, rejected as anything but "literary" when he read an early draft of the novel in 1890 (Turner 291). Gilder was evidently concerned that Cable's novel was too unconventional to attract many readers. We have no way of knowing precisely what Cable changed in response to Gilder's expectations, but he revised the manuscript several times between 1890 and 1893, presumably softening its social and political criticism to make his book more "literary," and when the novel finally appeared in 1895, it contained a sentimental love plot that, as Rubin contends, "clashes painfully with the Faulknerian realism of setting and tone" (127). The love story progresses laboriously through convoluted complications toward a resolution brought about by as hoaky a plot contrivance as Page himself ever invented. According to Rubin, our best bet to recover the book's literary merit is to disregard the love plot altogether. Rubin places the fault partially with Cable, for not having had the strength of his convictions to write a thoroughly realistic novel about the South, and partially with Gilder and the reading public, who were simply "not yet ready for realism" (131).

In Southern literary history, John March, Southerner is an important text because it embodies the pivotal shift from conventional romance to critical realism, from sentimentality to irony. One part of the novel looks back toward John Esten Cooke and

Augusta Evans Wilson and another looks forward to William Faulkner and Robert Penn Warren, thus anticipating for some scholars the Southern writer's "imaginative declaration of independence" from the stifling ambition to reach a broad audience (Watson 222). The narrative mode of John March, Southerner is still predominantly "rhetorical." Though Cable's characters are no longer, like Page's, simply "types" who function as parts of an argument the "rhetor" constructs, most of the action in John March, Southerner, particularly the final resolution of the plot's main conflict, is imposed from without rather than generated by the dramatic interaction of the characters themselves. Nevertheless, there is an important difference between John March, Southerner and Red Rock or Gordon Keith. Page's narrator is the traditional "rhetor," a gentleman speaking to readers who accept his perspective implicitly as the morally and politically normative outlook on reality. Being a gentleman, this "rhetor" need not and does not call attention to himself and does not become involved in the action he records. Cable's narrator is not as easily identified with a particular point of view. Through three quarters of the action, the narrator appears to stand outside of the events he relates, but suddenly, precisely at the moment when Cable introduces his "unrealistic" solution to the central plot complication, the "rhetor" disappears and the narrator is revealed as a participant in the dramatic action.

After John March, Southerner, Cable abandoned the effort to fuse elements of the popular romantic image of the South with a realistic vision of the region's most pressing social issues. The best of his later works, The Cavalier (1901) and Bylow Hill (1902), do little to challenge the perception of the South as an American dreamland where romance and chivalry once reigned supreme. The coming of the renascence was more impressively heralded by a writer who would declare that "popularity, though agreeable no doubt, was not . . . the ultimate standard" (A Certain Measure 30). Ellen Glasgow

emerged at the turn of the century as a novelist whose books managed both to be agreeably popular at the time and to break with established literary conventions. Even her earliest novels are "dialectical" rather than "rhetorical," but her subjects are still those of the traditional Southern writer. If Page and Cable wrote about "the South," the one to glorify and to revitalize the cultural myths with which that region had become identified, the other to question those same myths and to expose the violence, injustice, and ignorance that supported them, Glasgow wrote about individual Southerners, about plantation-bred gentlemen and their ladies, struggling to come to terms with their personal losses.

In the literary canon, Glasgow has long held her place as "an important transitional figure from romanticism to realism in Southern letters" (Godbold 69). At the beginning of her career, Glasgow had issued a call for change in Southern literature that has made her the designated precursor of Faulkner. What Southern fiction needed, she said, was "Blood and Irony": "Blood . . . because Southern culture had strained too far away from its roots in the earth"; and "Irony" because "it is the safest antidote to sentimental decay" (A Certain Measure 28). The length of her career alone places Glasgow in the ideal position to fill the role of a link between the romantic-sentimental tradition exemplified by her fellow Virginian Page and the ironic-realistic recovery of Southern fiction for the tradition of "serious" American literature. She published her first novel in 1897, one year before Red Rock appeared, and her last in 1941, five years after Faulkner had completed Absalom, Absalom!, the last of his four most important early novels.

The canonization of Ellen Glasgow has also been greatly facilitated by her admiration for Allen Tate and her strong sympathy with the Fugitive/Agrarian movement and the New Criticism it spawned. Though she did not contribute to the group's 1930

manifesto, I'll Take My Stand, her connection with its conservative ideology is unmistakable even in her earliest novels.

To some, Glasgow's acceptance of Tate's agrarian ideology marks a significant turnabout in her attitude toward Southern traditions. Allen Becker has observed that the young Glasgow had "welcomed industrialization and the rise of the middle class to political power" but as "the fruits of industrialization became visible," she shifted from opposing to actually defending traditional Southern society (152). And Ellen Caldwell has recently argued that Glasgow began with "corrective satire" aimed at an archaic pseudo-aristocracy in her early works but moved to an exploration of the dramatic tension between "feigned and true vestiges" of traditional society in her later novels (Caldwell 207).

Much of the evidence needed to construct an image of Ellen Glasgow as a youthful iconoclast can be found in a collection of essays Glasgow wrote at the end of her career. A Certain Measure: Interpretations of Prose Fiction (1938) outlines a sweeping design for her oeuvre as a novelist. Thirteen of her twenty novels, arranged in three groups, are to be understood as a "social history" of Virginia from 1850 to 1939 in the "more freely interpretive form of fiction" (3). The Battle-Ground and TheDeliverance, the first two installments in this history, are, much like John March, Southerner, difficult to label as either "realistic novels" or "popular romances." Neither the first, a novel about Virginia aristocrats in the years before and during the Civil War, nor the second, the story of a dispossessed tobacco planter during the 1880's and 1890's, fits the mold of Cable's The Cavalier or Page's Red Rock, but neither could be regarded comfortably as a radical departure from the tradition of Southern plantation literature. Because both novels seem to stand between two contradictory traditions, mixing irony and sentimentalism, psychological depth and stereotyping in

characterization at the same time, they are easily cited as evidence of the struggle of the artistic imagination against the stranglehold of outdated conventions. In fact, the self-image Glasgow presents in her preface essays to these two novels in A Certain Measure strongly encourages such an interpretation. She recalls having been a rebel in those years, the recipient of much "encouragement that was misunderstanding," an outsider in a literary world dominated by romances that "followed faithfully a well-worn and standardized pattern" (11).

Yet while it seems unquestionable that Glasgow was searching for new approaches to what Allen Tate once defined as "the Southern subject" - "the destruction by war and the later degradation of the South by carpetbaggers and scalawags, and a consequent lack of moral force and imagination in the cynical materialism of the New South" - criticism has been far less certain of the results she achieved ("The New Provincialism" 330). Earl Stanley Godbold, Glasgow's biographer, for instance, praises the first half of The Battle-Ground for its "splendidly drawn" picture of plantation life with "characters who are realistic because they are individuals" (59). But he strenuously objects to the boy-girl scenes, which lack passion and recall too strongly the sterile love plots of conventional plantation romances. Richie Devon Watson, by contrast, finds the first half of the novel entirely unrealistic but agrees with Godbold that the second half, Glasgow's account of the Civil War, rivals the degree of realism achieved by Crane in The Red Badge of Courage (234-5). David Atteberry, finally, has argued that Glasgow's representation of antebellum plantation life is neither realistic nor romantic but instead suffers from an excess of self-conscious anti-romanticism. Glasgow, he suggests, tried too hard to distance herself from the kind of writing she despised (5). Ellen Glasgow's own comments suggest at best a deliberate tentativeness. "The Battle-Ground," she writes, "is not a romance, it is, nevertheless, the work of

romantic youth." And, commenting on her earliest historical novels in general, she adds that they seem to her "more faithful to the reality of their time and place than I could, in the present, hope to make any record of that obliterated period" (A Certain Measure 7).

The Deliverance is often similarly regarded as possessing no internal coherence of its own other than that of the transition between two kinds of literature. Godbold, echoing the mainstream assessment, states that "the setting of Ellen Glasgow's novel and much of her characterization is closer to Page, [but] the theme of her work is closer to Faulkner" (69). That theme is the hero's decision to break completely with the past and cast "a single eye to the future in resolving . . . personal problems that were so intimately tied up with the history of the South" (Godbold 69). Thus Glasgow's hero, Christopher Blake, anticipates Bayard Sartoris, Quentin Compson III, and others whose painful flight from Southern history the renascence chronicled. Page's characters, and Cable's as well, "reacted to their lot in life as . . . Southerners," Glasgow's and Faulkner's, on the other hand, reacted as true individuals (true Americans) and "universal men" (69).

The discovery of Glasgow and Cable as transitional figures, anticipating though not quite mastering the transcendence of a regional consciousness steeped in outdated modes of fictional representation that hindered the perception of vital truths and unmitigated reality, indicates the presence of a desire to find legitimizing antecedents for the Southern renascence of the twentieth century as a belated response to the great American Renaissance of the mid-nineteenth century. More importantly, it also implies a conception of true literature as a realm inhabited by "universal men," whose identity within historically contingent factors of class, race, and gender is secondary. But if we are to take seriously the assertion that "literary fictions can no more transcend history than real persons," we are forced to acknowledge that Glasgow's Blakes, Lightfoots,

Amblers, and Fletchers can no more act as universal men than Faulkner's Compsons, Sartoris', and Snopes' - no more, in any event, than Page's Keiths, Grays, and Stills can act as representative Southerners (Jehlen 39).

The attempt to situate the five novels under consideration here in the framework of a critical terminology that equates sentimentality with triviality and regards objectivity as the absolute end of historical fiction fails to account unambiguously for the dynamics of these texts. Instead of representing the "transitional phase," during which Page, Cable, and Glasgow, each from an individual ideological perspective, engaged the Southern gentleman ideal, as the site of a confrontation between contrasting literary traditions or as an unreconciled conflict between the desire to tell the truth and the desire to achieve public success, one should follow the example of Julius Rowan Raper, who sees in the work of Ellen Glasgow, from her earliest Virginia novels onward, a desire for a harmonious resolution between the value of tradition and the need for social reform. Raper argues that "a full-blown intellectual dialectic" can be found in Glasgow's novels, "moving from thesis (usually illusion of one sort or another) through antithesis (reality) to synthesis" (12). In The Battle-Ground and The Deliverance, the illusion is the image of the plantation garden, of which Glasgow, unlike Page, had no first-hand experience; the reality is what lay beneath the picture of grace, beauty, gaiety, charm, and benevolence - the "lack of creative strength" and the dependence upon "the servitude of an alien race" (A Certain Measure 13). In other words, the illusion is gentlemanly freedom from "toil and tillage" as a model for the civilized self, much less for an entire civilization. The reality is the psychological need to engage in "social productive labor," to acknowledge the power of work as self-creation that the plantation myth had long denied.

The synthesis, Glasgow's "own imaginative fusion of the illusion and the reality," remains elusive in these two early novels (Raper 12). Having rejected the traditional plantation order as deeply flawed, if not deeply immoral, Glasgow also rejected the emerging bourgeois market society, despite her enthusiasm for the rising middle class in Virginia. The "fusion," defined at the end of The Deliverance when the disenfranchised aristocrat recovers his forefathers' plantation by marrying a daughter of the middle class, "a higher offspring of a lower form," can not be interpreted as a "realistic" alternative, but Glasgow's romantic evasion may be illuminated instructively in context with similar evasions at the end of different approaches to the same problem in Page's and Cable's novels (A Certain Measure 39). Traces of the dialectic in Glasgow's two novels can also be found in the "rhetorical" romances Red Rock, Gordon Keith, and John March, Southerner, but only if we take seriously their sentimental plots and stereotyped characterization and do not reject those elements out of hand as concessions to the demands of an uncritical reading public. We must assume, the heightened interiority of Glasgow's narrative notwithstanding, that her characters are as much "the products of an environment" as Page's and Cable's, shaped by similar social, political, and cultural preconditions.

All five novels tell a story of loss and redemption. The central character in each is the last male heir in a long line of Southern landowning and, with the exception of John March, slaveholding families. In each story the hero is separated from his inherited place in the social and economic order by the Civil War and its aftermath. As a consequence of this displacement, each man faces uncertainties about his role in society and about his sense of selfworth as an individual. Finally, in each a resolution is brought about through a romantic love. In this ultimate triumph of love over the forces of history, all five narratives resemble the post-war reconciliation romances, in which

typically a gallant Yankee officer marries a blushing plantation belle, but all five shift the neutral territory such romances had initially "staked out" between the North and the South away from regional concerns toward questions about social relations within a traditional upper-class white Southern society that had been destabilized by a lost war, emancipation, Reconstruction, and the emergence of a New South creed and its romantic love of work.

Page, Cable, and Glasgow were prescient of Allen Tate's belief that the antebellum South contained the seeds of its own destruction, that it could not have sustained its resistance to the capitalist marketplace even if the Civil War had not occurred (Young xiv). It would be a serious mistake to assume that Page, for all his nostalgic backward looking, did not recognize that the Old South had been an illusion, an illusion of perfection in an imperfect world. And again in direct anticipation of the radical agrarians of 1930, Page, Cable, and Glasgow felt that the new, standardized South did not promise a likely improvement over the old one.

In his only novel, The Fathers (1938), Allen Tate dramatized the same societal shift his predecessors had approached from their pre- and semi-modernist literary perspectives. Tate's narrator, Lacy Buchan, a contemporary of Page's Gray and Keith, Cable's March, and Glasgow's Montjoy and Blake, describes the difference between the old order and the new one as a change in the way individual identity was tied into social rank and class:

> The individual quality of a man was bound up with
> his kin and the "places" where they lived; thinking
> of a man we could easily bring before the mind's eye
> all those subtly interwoven features of his position.
> "Class" consisted solely in a certain code of behavior.
> Even years later I am always a little amazed to hear
> a man described as the coal man or the steel man or the
> plate-glass man, descriptions of people after the way
> they make their money, not after their manner of life. (135)

Elsewhere, Tate argued that "traditional man" succeeded in achieving "a unity of his moral nature and his economics," where modern man failed "dismally in that greatest of all human tasks." Traditional man "dominated the means of life; he was not dominated by it." In traditional societies, "the whole economic basis of life is closely bound up with moral behavior, and it is possible to behave morally all the time" ("What Is a Traditional Society?" 556). Page wholeheartedly embraced the equasion of moral behavior, according to the code of gentlemanliness, and economic nature, because he could believe that the Old South had contained an essential good that was separable from the economic sin of slavery. "Slavery itself," Allen Tate wrote, "entailed a certain moral responsibility which the capitalist employer in free societies did not need to exercise if it was not his will to do so" (xii). This sense of moral responsibility, engendered by the "organic relationship" of slave and master, empowers Page's vision of the traditional Southern gentleman as the model of a still viable moral alternative to the levelling of all values in a capitalist market society.

For Cable and Glasgow the equation was more problematic: given the presence of the slave at "the economic basis of life" in the Old South, given the slave's place in "antebellum man's" dominance over "the means of life," and given the slave's "economic nature" in a culture where gentlemen were not known "after the way they made their money," they questioned whether or not it was possible for a gentleman conceived upon the traditional model to behave morally at all. But both shared with Page a skepticism of the emerging market society where ultimately all moral values are reducible to commodity values (Genovese 125). And thus both, along with Page and Allen Tate in the 1930's, searched for a way to reconcile in a "meaningful relationship" the gentleman's "present circumstance and the traditions to which he belonged" (Young xiii).

In the effort to provide a realistic solution, all five novels fail. That is, they fail if and in the way that the often disputed evasion sequence at the end of Huckleberry Finn is a failure, when Tom Sawyer reappears *ex machina* to wrench control of the narrative away from Huck, the "dramatic dialectician," and imposes, a resolution upon the action from without, in the manner of a "ham Southern rhetorician of the old school," (Tate "A Southern Mode of the Imagination" 567). Each of the five novels by Page, Cable, and Glasgow ends in such an evasion, stranding the gentleman in a vaguely conceived social space, in but not of bourgeois society. Cable and Glasgow could discern better than Page the Southern gentleman's self-destructive tendencies in a world where occupational identities are the primary access to social power, but neither was ultimately more successful in establishing a distinction between gentlemanliness as an outmoded social role and as a moral corrective against unchecked materialism and greed.

In a post-modern romance of the Southern gentleman, written after the climax of the renascence had passed in the 1950's, Walker Percy resumes the telling of the story Page, Cable, and Glasgow began over a half-century before. Will Barrett, the hero of The Last Gentleman (1966) and The Second Coming (1980), is a fictional character in two senses of the term. On the one hand, of course, he is the creation of Walker Percy, the author; on the other hand, he is a product of literary history. The movement from an authoritative "rhetor" to the "dialectical" mode, the internalization of action or conflict, is, in Will Barrett's case, part of "a family pattern." His ancestors gradually "had turned ironical and lost [the] gift for action." The family was "honorable and violent," but over the years, "the violence had been deflected and turned inward." The great-grandfather was a typical "rhetor," who "knew what was what and said so." The grandfather bears a resemblance to Page's Gordon Keith, who "was brave but . . . gave much thought to the business of being brave." The father recalls the narrator of John March, Southerner

and Glasgow's The Battle-Ground and The Deliverance. He, too, was brave and "said he didn't care what others thought, but he did care," so for him "living was a strain," and he finally "turned ironical." Will Barrett himself, "the last of the line, . . . [does] not know what to think" and so he becomes "a watcher and a listener and a wanderer" (The Last Gentleman 16). His journey begins in the post-modern urban world of New York City, whence he travels to a modern South, where, as in a fulfillment of Grady's dream, everybody is "in love with work," and finally, at the end of the second novel, he finds an organic innocence from the insanity that goes for sanity in his world with a new Southern Eve in a womblike tropical greenhouse.

Like the evasions in which Barrett's fictional ancestors in Page, Cable, and Glasgow find refuge, Percy's resolution enacts a flight from civilization into a space where, as Henry Nash Smith said, "fidelity to the uncoerced self" is possible (Mark Twain 122). But at the same time, what makes Will Barrett a Southern gentleman in the tradition of Page, Cable, and Glasgow is the presence of a conflicting desire to justify his forefathers, for his flight is an escape into time, rather than from time, that proclaims the failure of civilization in the present but does not deny the coercion of the self civilization demands. The victory over time, not the escape from it, is the quintessential wish enactment embedded in the desire for pastoral stasis. The distinguishing mark of Southern fiction is its persistence in confronting time, in not seeking solutions either in a timeless absolute (Melville's Ishmael) or in movement through space away from civilization (Cooper's Natty Bumppo). The Southern gentleman has never been separable from a specific time and a timebound space. Time itself is the enemy, and no removal into a space as yet untouched by time or into a metaphorically detemporalized space is imaginable for him. He is not Huckleberry Finn. Huck's social class origins are quite irrelevant to the point. The narrative controlled by Huck leads into the

Northern solution to the problem of civilization, the movement through space to "the Territory ahead of the rest." He is, rather, Tom Sawyer, who wears the emblem of his affliction, a watch chain adorned with the bullet that wounded him, with irrational pride (Huckleberry Finn 362).

TWO: Red Rock - The Destruction of Arcady

If we accept popularity as a measure of literary importance, Thomas Nelson Page's Red Rock is easily the most significant Southern novel of the 1890's. No other novel written by a Southerner during that decade reached as large an audience as Page's "Chronicle of Reconstruction" did (Bargainnier 44). Most contemporary reviewers, in the North as well as the South, praised the author for his attempt to handle a troublesome subject with political restraint and objectivity, though most also felt obliged to point out that Page's first novel-length treatment of post-war Southern history suffered from serious artistic flaws (Gross 94-5). Page, who pledged himself to undivided "devotion for the South" and "pride in the Union" and professed that he had "never wittingly written a line" which he did not hope might "bring about a better understanding between the North and the South, and finally lead to a more perfect Union" (In Ole Virginia xi), had mellowed his indictment of Radical Reconstruction in the South considerably by superimposing upon the political and economic conflict an alluring love interest that involved, in the manner of conventional reconciliation romances, dashing Cavaliers, virtuous plantation belles, and genteel Yankees, decidedly sympathetic to the Southern cause. But literary tastes had shifted toward realism in fiction, while Page's novel is unfashionably modelled after the romance tradition. In fact, compared to the episodic romances of Sir Walter Scott, Red Rock is remarkably bare of action-filled incident and recalls what Richard Chase has called the "static romances" of Hawthorne in which "the

allegorical and moral rather than the dramatic possibilities of the form" receive primary emphasis (13).

Read with an eye to the political allegory, Red Rock retains for today an arguable utility as an exemplary textbook study of the "tragic legend of Reconstruction" that was fast becoming the institutionalized interpretation of that period at the end of the century. This legend, which dominated the "official" historical view of Reconstruction well into the twentieth century, as Kenneth Stampp has shown, was not simply the result of a "southern literary or historiographical conspiracy" (13). Northern historians like James Ford Rhodes, John W. Burgess, and especially William A. Dunning of Columbia University began to portray Reconstruction in almost exactly the terms Page outlined in Red Rock. In Kenneth Stampp's synopsis, the Dunningite version of Reconstruction reads like a virtual plot-outline for Page's "Chronicle." The Civil War had been a mobilization of the most noble and patriotic impulses on both sides. The North had fought to preserve the sanctity of the Union and the South had risen to defend its sacred soil. In 1865, President Andrew Johnson had set in motion the relatively mild program for reconstruction devised by Abraham Lincoln, and Southerners, willing to accept the outcome of the war and the abolition of slavery, had prepared to adjust and to resume business as usual. But radicals "unfortunately had their own sinister purposes" and, fortified by an overwhelming victory in the congressional elections of 1866, effectively dismantled the President's agenda, subjected the South to military occupation and placed "the bottom rail on top" by forcing Southern whites to be ruled by their former slaves and new state governments "dominated by base and corrupt men." In the final act of the tragedy, the outraged and humiliated decent whites of the South rose to resist the unnatural order of things and, using violence only when necessary, unseated the carpetbagger and scalawag regimes from power. Peace returned finally in 1877 when

President Hayes removed federal troops from the South, but "the legacy of radical reconstruction remained in the form of a solidly Democratic South and embittered relations between the races" (7-8).

Most modern readers have accepted the premise that Reconstruction is indeed the primary subject matter of RedRock and that plot elements not directly related to the political and social issues of the historical background, which account for at least half of the story, are mere sugarcoating, designed to make an unpleasant drama more palatable, and should therefore be disregarded. Theodore L. Gross, for instance, argues that Page wanted to deliver a comprehensive portrait of Reconstruction in the South but could not control the formal difficulties of long narrative fiction, a genre he had attempted only once before (On Newfound River; 1891). Gross can find no formal coherence in the novel other than that of the political tract and laments Page's failure to depict the interesting "conflict between the new freedmen and their former masters, the picture of the devastated South, the invasion of Carpetbaggers and Radical Republicans, the whole image of Black Reconstruction that is evoked by James Pike in The Prostrate South" (95). Only Earl F. Bargainnier has challenged the notion that Page had indeed attempted to write a realistic account of Reconstruction (or that he should at least have done so) (45). In Bargainnier's opinion, Red Rock is of one piece with the rest of Page's earlier works. For Page, "the changes in Southern society during Reconstruction were a lesser concern," Bargainnier argues, "than what that society had been before the war" (45). What Page wanted was to invoke the "moral basis" of the Old Order, which he had glorified in numerous tales set in the antebellum days, "when men treated women chivalrously and women relied on men implicitly, when success bore no relation to wealth, and when the seventh commandment was not deemed a proper subject for conversation in mixed company" (In Ole Virginia viii). According to Bargainnier,

Page's foremost intention for Red Rock was that it should present one more belated answer to Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin.

Bargainnier's reappraisal of Red Rock takes a step in the right direction but falls short of recognizing the entire foundation of the "moral order" Page sought to enshrine. The historical events and conflicts of Reconstruction, which the plot ostensibly dramatizes, form an important authorizing and authenticating function in the text, but they are not the most important part of the story. In the foreground stand personal struggles for love and redemption, for ownership of ancestral lands, and for power in a South without masters and slaves. The primary subject matter of the book is not the historical drama of Reconstruction but a concern that Page, the descendent of once powerful and influential Tidewater aristocrats who had experienced a steady decline in prominence and fortune, shared with many members of the old middle classes in the North during the years after the Civil War. "In the new age of industrial enterprise," writes Kenneth Stampp, "there seemed to be no place for the old families with their genteel culture and strong traditions of disinterested public service." Besieged on the one hand by "new and powerful industrial capitalists" and on the other by the growing political influence of foreign immigrants crowded into the tenements of eastern cities, these families perceived a "threat to the traditional America [they] had loved - and dominated - to that once vigorous American nationality that was Protestant, Anglo-Saxon and pure" (Stampp 19). Page's principal aim was to disassociate the image of his native region from the Confederacy, the Old South he had himself known only in its twilight, and to concretize instead an idea of the South that would reveal the region as a repository of what Page considered to be the authentic American national character. Red Rock is Page's program for a "more perfect union" in which the best of the North, the

material benefits of industrialization in particular, is combined with the best of the South, the traditional values of home, family, and benevolent Anglo-Saxon dominance.

Page had written and revised the manuscript of Red Rock at least once before 1885 but had evidently not yet found an appropriate form for the story. At that time, the son of Nelsons, Burwells, Lees, Carters and a long line of aristocratic Pages from Hanover County, Virginia, had already experienced first hand the economic decline of Virginia's gentry. His family had still owned a sizeable plantation and sixty slaves before the war, but John Page of Oakland, his father, was no longer a wealthy man. After the war, Thomas Nelson Page was forced to work as a tutor before he could afford to enter law school at the University of Virginia. Throughout the 1870's and 1880's he practiced law, eventually in Richmond, while he discovered a moderately profitable and, in typical gentlemanly fashion, leisurely byline as a writer. Page had been poor and he had bitterly resented his poverty. His quickly gained preeminence as one of the leading practitioners of the popular local color school gave him a certain redemptive status but it did not relieve financial constraints satisfactorily. All of that changed in 1892, when he met Mrs. Florence Lathrop Field on a lecture tour in Chicago. One year later he married the wealthy widow, gave up his law practice and moved to Washington, becoming, as Theodore Gross describes it, "a fashionable man of the city" whose "cosmopolitan, sophisticated life . . . had little to do with the provincial world of his stories" (40). Page had thus achieved personal success through his avocation as a writer and, through his marriage, an enviable independence.

The ambiguities created by the contrast between his personal vindication from the decline that affected the Southern gentry over the years and the traditional code of gentlemanliness idealized in his fictions Page confronted more directly in the sequel to his first novel, Gordon Keith, a semi-autobiographical narrative set during the same

period as Red Rock. But there is enough evidence to suggest that Jacquelin Gray, the hero of the first novel, is a prototype of Gordon Keith. It is clear that in Gordon Keith Page does not dramatize historical events on the grand scale of Red Rock but instead tries to work through questions that weighed heavily on his mind - questions about his own identity as a Virginia gentleman and a successful member of a new commercial society, about the place of the South he loved in American national identity, and about the future of that national identity in the framework of an expanding market society. In Gordon Keith, Page looks from Reconstruction toward the future; in Red Rock, he looks to the past. The novel is a reinterpretation of Southern history to provide an empowerment of the gentleman ideal in the future, to give that ideal validity even after much of its economic and cultural basis had changed or, as Page feared it might have been, destroyed entirely.

The story opens during late 1850's when the old "haunt of peace" has already become divided between secessionists like the fireeating General Legaie and the proud Major Jacquelin Gray, master of Red Rock plantation, on one side and conciliatory conservatives like Gray's neighbor Dr. Cary of Birdwood on the other. In Cary, a veteran of the Mexican war and an ardent pro-Union Whig, Page personified the tragic ideal of the old order gentleman. When sectionalist tempers flare on the eve of the conflict, Cary warns his neighbours of the inevitable destruction war must bring: "You are now the wealthiest people in the world to-day - not in mere riches, but in wealth. You may become the poorest. No people who enter a war wealthy and content ever come out of war so" (RR 12).

The opening chapters of the book are devoted to a portrayal of that "wealth" which is not "mere riches." Here Page draws on the familiar themes and devices of many antebellum plantation romances designed to "explain" the South and to counter

abolitionist representations of plantation reality. Two business travellers from Boston, Mr. Welch and his young cousin, Lawrence Middleton, lose their way in the picturesque countryside, are overtaken by nightfall, and experience the famed Southern hospitality at Red Rock, where on that night many members of the vastly extented family that connects one plantation household with the others in the region have gathered for a formal ball in honor of a newlywed couple. Page's picture highlights the merits of these aristocrats, their benevolent treatment of their "servants" and their desire above all to be left alone in their world, and the two visitors are dutifully impressed and charmed by the grace and grandeur they witness and by the pervasive kinship bonds that embrace the entire family, black and white. On the following day, Welch and Middleton tour the plantation and observe the "hands working and singing in the fields" (RR 29). The effect of the scene on Welch is that he feels himself transported into a remote past. Page adds a certain pseudo-objectivity to the description of the plantation idyll by distancing direct authorial speech (the "rhetor's" voice) from the emotional content. On occasion, the voice of the narrator becomes in fact that of the presumably disinterested Northerner Welch, whose "inner speech" is transmitted in the form of "quasi-direct discourse" (Bakhtin 319), as in following passage in which the conventionalized romantic image of "central splendor" surrounded by "picturesqueness" and enclosed within a wall-like line of trees on the horizon is presented as authorial speech transcribing the character's thoughts:

> The plantation surpassed any he had yet seen. It was
> a little world in itself - a sort of feudal domain:
> the great house on its lofty hill, surrounded by gardens;
> the broad fields stretching away in every direction, with
> waving grain or green pastures dotted with sheep and cattle,
> and all shut in and bounded by the distant woods.
> (RR 29)

When the local rector, a Mr. Langstaff, remarks that "the Garden of Eden was situated not far from that spot," the Boston businessman may smile at "the old clergyman's ingenuousness," but Page himself is only half jesting (RR 29). To him, the domain of Red Rock or of his own birthplace in Hanover County, a world centered on the single home on the hill, had been situated closer to Eden than Welch's Boston, the city on a hill in New England.

Red Rock contains no pre-Faulknerian sense of tension between admiration for the old plantation South and recognition of its central evil, the "lie" at the heart of Thomas Sutpen's design; but neither was Page content merely to celebrate and lament the lost order's "moral basis." The "sin" of the gentlemen in Red Rock county lies, according to Page, in their blind faith in an illusion. Dr. Cary, speaking for Page, reminds his neighbors on the eve of war that their "desire to interfere with nobody" (RR 30) and to be in turn left alone by others has blinded them to the true meaning of the conflict at hand: "We are at war now - with the greatest power on earth: the power of universal progress. It is not the North that we shall have to fight, but the world. Go home and make ready. If we have talked like fools, we shall at least fight like men" (RR 41).

The war itself, Page implies, was precipitated by a lack of rational restraint on both sides. In the South, Dr. Cary's warnings are ignored and secessionists prevail; Cary himself faces Robert E. Lee's choice between the Union he believes in and the honor of his native state which he feels compelled to defend when President Lincoln calls for troops to invade the South. In the North, abolitionists are overcome by their own zeal. Page declines to attempt an account of the war itself: "That period was too tremendous to be made a mere fragment of any history." He invokes the "lost cause" of

Southern "unconquerable valor" pitted against the irreversible "laws of nature" (RR 49). The war serves only to define a dividing line between the illusion of timeless pastoral splendor and the reality, as Cary had foreseen it, the invasion of "universal progress" into the garden landscape, Southern resistance, and the ultimate struggle for reconciliation.

Approximately a third of the way into the text, the plot of Red Rock begins to become disjointed. Page has retained the essential structure of Sir Walter Scott's episodic romances, but in comparison, Red Rock is remarkable for its lack of action. The series of incidents is loosely held together by what are in effect two separate levels of interest.

On one level the plot reflects the course of historical events between 1865 and 1877. The historical allegory, from chapter seven on, is easily summarized. The Red Rock county gentlemen who survived the war return defeated but unvanquished, because honor has been preserved and the land, though scarred by the war, is still theirs. Their efforts to restore order and to affect a smooth transition from a slave economy to a wage economy show all signs of success despite attempts by a few recalcitrant former slaves to generate dissent among the workforce. Then Jonadab Leech, a former bookkeeper in Boston, notable for his violent abolitionist speeches before the war and his absence from the war itself, appears in the county seat, Brutusville, to head the local Freedman's Bureau. Leech's authority grows quickly as he is supplied with the necessary instruments of power by the federal government. The carpetbagger finds a ready ally in Hiram Still, Major Gray's former overseer and a coward like Leech, who had preached secession but declined to fight. While Leech is ruled by a thirst for power, Still virtually personifies greed, and both are motivated by a desire for personal vengeance against the county gentry, especially young Jacquelin Gray, the heir of Red

Rock after his father's death in the war, Steve Allen, Jacquelin's boyhood companion, and Dr. Cary.

Still has mysteriously amassed a fortune during the war and he holds in his possession a large bond secured against the Grays' plantation, which he stole from his employer's home. Enabled by these instruments and protected by Leech, Still manages to become the owner of both Red Rock and Birdwood estates. The legal battle between Still and Gray, the usurper and the true owner of Red Rock, and the conflict between Leech and Steve Allen, who quickly becomes the champion of the planters' resistance movement, constitute what one might refer to as the novel's public sphere of action. This is connected to a parallel private sphere or level of action through the presence of the two "good" Yankees Page had introduced in the antebellum chapters.

Lawrence Middleton has returned to the county as commander of the occupational forces in Brutusville. He becomes an ally in Gray's and Allen's fight against Still and Leech, but he also plays an ambiguous role in Gray's private quest for happiness. Jacquelin Gray had long been in love with Dr. Cary's daughter, Blair, the representative plantation belle, part unimpregnable fortress of virtue and part irresistible enchantress. It is to these contradictory qualities that Gray falls victim. Though the reader knows that she has never wished for anything but to be Gray's, he manages to convince himself that she loves the slightly older Steve Allen and, after he is disabused of that notion, becomes persuaded that Lawrence Middleton has captured her heart.

Mr. Welch also returns to the county, bringing with him his wife, who is inspired by a philanthropic mission to eliminate all traces of backwardness and disorganization from the shiftless Southern social institutions, and his daughter, Ruth, who perceives the South through the romantic veil of moonlight and magnolias, who is in other words a victim of the very romanticism Page had helped to proliferate through stories like

"Marse Chan" (1881) and "Unc' Edinburg's Drowndin'" (1886). Ruth Welch predictably falls in love with the South. She begins to emulate Blair Cary and soon becomes attracted to the handsome, chivalrous Steve Allen.

The end of the novel is dominated by several lawsuits, and in these the two separate spheres intersect. First, Jacquelin Gray, having obtained evidence of Still's fraud, sues the overseer for his family's land. During the trial, a former Gray slave, who had witnessed Still's theft, testifies in his "young master's" behalf, but the corrupt judge, one of Leech's pawns, sees to it that justice is denied. The second legal action involves Steve Allen. Allen had organized a band of "nightriders" and disarmed Leech's black militia, purportedly to avoid potentially dangerous race riots. Later, when the Klansmen begin to use their power for dishonorable personal revenge, Allen distances himself from the organization. He even rescues Leech from them at one point. Allen's trial for treason is the final showdown between Leech and the gentry. The only witness who could identify Steve Allen as the leader of the Klansmen is Ruth Welch, who learns in the nick of time that Allen returns her affection, agrees to marry him on the eve of the trial, and is thus saved from testifying against him. This defeat marks the end of Leech's career in Red Rock county. His insane political ambitions have already cost him the support of his former allies in the state and national governments and his failure to secure the rebel Allen makes him powerless. He leaves the area in disgrace. Soon thereafter, in a retrial of the land suit, Jacquelin Gray recovers most of his ancestral estate and is finally united with Blair.

There is no realistic accounting for the complications and contrived solutions by which Page manages to end his novel where it began, with the celebration of a wedding at Red Rock. In a manner of speaking, Page's medium is his message - nothing happens in Red Rock because nothing happened in Red Rock; the new South is merely

an extension of the old. Only one apparent inconsistency mars the otherwise seamless resolution of all conflicts. Hiram Still, Gray's principal antagonist in the same way that Leech was Steve Allen's, is at least partially redeemed at the end of the novel. Jacquelin Gray agrees to a legal compromise with Still because he wants to allow his aging spinster aunt Thomasia to return to her garden at Red Rock, and the overseer is permitted to retain possession of his old house and a large share of the lands the Gray family had owned before the war. The villainous scalawag thus escapes legal retribution for his crimes, and that this should be so seems at first incongruous.

Hiram Still is in many ways Page's most "realistic" character. He is the only one who exhibits a degree of psychological complexity that approximates actual character development. And he is the only character in the book whose moral status in Page's scheme of things undergoes a fundamental shift. Early in the novel, Still is no more than Leech's Southern counterpart. Still's villainy is only slightly mitigated by his habit of phrasing his financial schemes in picturesque agricultural metaphors. But Still's character has another dimension that Leech lacks completely. Hiram Still is a father, a domestic relation which in itself separates him from Leech, who remains solitary throughout, and which also helps to account for Still's ultimate redemption. Still's fraudulent quest for money and land is motivated by the desire to advance the social status of his son Washy and his daughter Virgy. Washy Still studies medicine but is, unlike the gentlemanly healer Dr. Cary, interested in the acquisition of wealth and rank alone and finally must share Leech's fate of banishment from Red Rock. In Washington Still Page has personified the worst aspects of the new South's "divided mind." Washy is a shallow pretender to the ranks of gentlemen, one who masks his purely materialistic ambitions behind affectations of leisure and phony geneaologies. Hiram Still himself becomes increasingly uneasy about his newfound status as the master of Red Rock. He

perceives keenly the disjunction between the hall's splendor and his own simple origins; he even develops an insane fear that a ghost from the Grays' portrait gallery has descended to haunt him. Thus Still, the villain, gradually elicits sympathy as a victim. When, finally, his own son begins to turn against him, to ridicule and abuse him for his crude ways, Still has become more pathetic than threatening.

The sanctity of home and family means something to Hiram Still. Leech's worst feature is his total immunity to such feelings. Page reveals the most hideous aspect of Leech's character last, long after he has figured as the conventional evil Yankee carpetbagger. Leech, we are told, was at one time married but came to consider his wife a hindrance to his political ambitions and eventually abandoned her, threatening violence should she ever reveal their relationship publicly. The wife (along with everybody else whose presence is required by, as Mark Twain once put it, the "exigencies of literature") turns up in Red Rock county at a time when Leech is already besieged by mounting political problems (Autobiography 4). But her proffered sympathy is once again cruelly rejected. Nevertheless, she remains steadfastly concerned about her husband's welfare and it is, in fact, in response to her pleading that Steve Allen decides to save Leech from the Klansmen. In light of Mrs. Leech's fidelity and her husband's indifference to the sanctity of their marriage vows, the fact that Leech's destruction is brought about by yet another wedding in the novel gains special significance. The marriage of Ruth Welch and Steve Allen removes Leech's principal antagonist beyond reach; thus the institution Leech had scorned on his way to power finally renders him powerless.

Red Rock is, at least in part, addressed to (Northern) readers of sentimental domestic fiction. Page foregoes an explicit dramatization of the political and economic aspects of Reconstruction, which, according to Gross, would have made the plot more "realistic" and therefore more "interesting," and represents historical events instead in

terms of a conflict between predatory and specifically masculine individualism and the values of domestic happiness, family, and home. It is no accident that the intersectional marriage, which symbolizes the reconciliation of regional differences, unites a Northern woman and a traditional Cavalier gentleman, a man whose measure of virility is honor and selfless heroism, not power in a male dominated sphere separate from a female domestic sphere. Furthermore, the intersectional marriage that does take place is interestingly illuminated by one that does not.

Had Page added to the wedding of Ruth Welch and Steve Allen that of Blair Cary and Lawrence Middleton, the plot structure of Red Rock would only have gained in symmetry. In fact, Page had structured a reconciliation plot around the romantic attachment of a Northern officer to a Southern belle once before. In "Meh Lady" (1886), one of Page's earliest published short stories, Captain Wilton of the Union army protects the young mistress of a plantation against Northerners who occupy and ravage her home after her brother is killed in the war. While Wilton recovers from wounds sustained in the struggle with the invaders, he falls in love with Meh Lady, who is given no name in the story because, as Theodore L. Gross explains, "she is larger and more significant that any single human being; her traits of courage and stoicism, dignity and loyalty, are identified with all Southern women" (30). Wilton, like his successor Lawrence Middleton in Red Rock, represents a victorious North motivated by sympathy and admiration for Southerners and their civilization, in sharp contrast with others who are determined instead to exploit the defenselessness of the defeated in order to gratify their personal ambition. But Page's short story does not conclude with the union that would have brought the reconciliation theme to its completion. Meh Lady decides that she can not marry the Union soldier and Wilton returns to the North. Like Meh Lady, Blair Cary represents the type of Southern womanhood whom Page elsewhere identified

as "the key to the entire civilization" ("Social Life" 193). And like Meh Lady, Blair rejects her Northern suitor. Despite his evident sympathy for the plight of Red Rock county's dispossessed planter families, Middleton is thus denied possession of the "key" to the plantation garden and finds himself instead removed to another garden of the American imagination, the Western pastoral, where he is reassigned "to keep the Indians down" (RR 183).

The recurrence of the rejection motif and the shift to a reconciliation plot in Red Rock that unites a Northern woman and a heroic, unconquered Southern gentleman suggest the presence of a concern about the consequences of Southern adjustment to the Northern "standard " that for Page qualified the practical need for a complete regional reconciliation.

When Middleton arrives at Birdwood to inform Blair of his new orders and also, one suspects, to gain a greater sense of assurance about her feelings toward him prior to his departure, he is surprised to find Blair not in the rosegarden or in the parlor of the Cary's mansion but baking bread in the kitchen behind the main house. Though Middleton had known Blair only as a playful, coquettish belle, seeing her in so unpicturesque a setting as the plantation kitchen actually deepens his admiration: "[He] thought she never looked so charming. His heart gave a bound." In Middleton's imagination, the unexpected discovery reveals Blair's essential femininity and increases her sexual allure: "She was dressed in a white dress, and her skirt was turned back and pinned about her slender waist; her sleeves were rolled up, showing her round white arms" (RR 182). Middleton's response is shaped by conventional northern notions about the separation of gender spheres. When Blair enlists his help in her task, he accepts the rolling-pin with good-natured humor and "set[s] to work . . . industriously,"

demonstrating by his obvious lack of skill his awareness of having crossed into the territory of "woman's work" (RR 182).

As the two, he dressed in his uniform, the sign of the conqueror, and she in her still unconquered virginal white, toil together, they are discovered by Mammy Krenda, the Cary family's faithful retainer and a staunch representative of Old South values. Krenda is apparently in shock over what she sees: "What in the worl' air you doin' in this kitchen?" (RR 183) But it is not Middleton to whom this question is addressed. Krenda pretends to be as surprised as Middleton had been to find Blair at work. She suggests that her mistress must have taken it into her head to follow a spontaneous whim and to play at breadmaking *pour passer les temps.* Krenda's pride as the household's supreme authority over domestic affairs and the honor of the entire family, black and white, with which she identifies are at stake. A white lady does not work in the kitchen because she has to, nor does she depend on such work for the realization of her womanly selfhood. Krenda and her white mistress both know that Blair has been doing all the cooking at Birdwood since most of Dr. Cary's "servants" have left the plantation, and even Blair finds Mammy Krenda's insistence on maintaining the appearance of gentility excessive. In fact, as Page has been diligent to establish throughout the novel, it was due principally to "woman's work" that Southern civilization survived the war and its aftermath with all of its essential characteristics intact. The point Page sought to establish in this scene, which concludes with Blair's rejection of Middleton as a suitable husband, is that Northern and traditional Southern interpretations of the meaning of "woman's work" in particular and the social functions of work in general are fundamentally different from each other. North and South shared, according to Fox-Genovese, "an ideal of the universal division between women and men. They agreed that defined male and female spheres constituted the bedrock of society and community,"

but they did not interpret the nature of these spheres in the same way (195)."Southerners," Fox-Genovese explains, ". . . did not view either families or households as primarily female preserves, but as terrain that contained woman's sphere" and belonged properly under the "governance and protection" of men (195).

Page had paused over the events of the Civil War only long enough to decribe them as a formative process for men. The war had changed "striplings" into "heroes" in the short span of four years. Boys, like Jacquelin Gray and Steve Allen, had entered the battle and emerged "from that flaming fire" as heroes and men, "blinded for any lesser light" (RR 49). And the war had also "stamped itself" upon the women. Dr. Cary, upon his return to Birdwood, acknowledges to his wife that "men fought a quarter of the war and . . . women fought three quarters" (RR 60). After the war, when men were still engaged in the public arena fighting their battles against Leech and his abuses of law and justice, women like Blair and her mother were again called upon to see to it that the society the men were defending continued to exist. Blair has thus not only taken over domestic tasks from her servants and thereby willingly suffered the loss of dignity Krenda attempts to conceal from Middleton, but she has also considerably expanded the territory of what was in the old plantation household the proper sphere of a lady's work. Blair has made and sold preserves to raise money her father needed to pay his property taxes, and she has even taught school and earned a salary. None of these activities could be considered "fit for a lady." In fact, as Elizabeth Fox-Genovese explains, "earning a salary for regular teaching was viewed as an unfortunate necessity for widows or, even worse, wives who had fallen victim to their husbands' inadequacies" (46).

Page's portrait of Blair could be interpreted as threatening not alone to Blair's image as a lady, but also to the status of gentlemen who were forced to rely on women for income generation. Blair has not only assumed the actual performance of household

duties, while Southern plantation mistresses traditionally merely appropriated as their own "work" tasks that were in reality carried out by slave servants, she has ventured beyond the lady's territory and entered the public marketplace (cf. Fox-Genovese 128 ff). But Page makes it clear the Blair's work is not to be seen as an expression of personal ambition or a desire to redefine her place in an established social order, to alter her sense of identity through work. The meaning of Blair's work is completely encompassed by the sacrifice made for the maintenance of a social order that had been deprived of its natural economic foundation. When Middleton feels as though he has secretly discovered Blair's true womanhood behind the facade of the belle's playful inactivity, he is quite correct. But what the Northerner sees as a woman's self-fulfilling work is in fact quite the opposite. Blair is most truely herself, most truely the "key" to Southern civilization, when she demonstrates her capacity for self-denial. Like her mother, who dutifully and gladly returns the responsibilities of governing the extensive Cary household into her husband's hands when he has returned from the war, Blair awaits the man who will lead her back into the sheltered "rosegarden." That man is not the Northerner Middleton.

Page reiterates the point that the North does not understand how the South works in another context. Mrs. Welch, fired with zeal and determination to stamp out Southern sluggishness and shiftlessness, is an embodiment of the Protestant work ethic. For her no higher calling exists than to fulfill a useful function in life. She embarks on her Southern junket to redeem the misguided from the habit of indolence and to enlighten the black freedmen through education in the gospel of work only to remain mystified and frustrated by the Southerners' apparent indifference to effiency and ambition, but her missionary zeal is dampened when she discovers that the very measures she designed

with great fervor and enterprise have already been put into practice, quietly and as a matter of course, by Southern women like Blair, Aunt Thomasia, and Mrs. Cary.

Thomas Nelson Page was neither the first nor the last Southern writer to insist that Southern life, culture, and institutions could not be understood by the uninitiated. Mrs. Welch herself has to learn about the difficulties involved in "explaining" the South to outsiders. Having made the discovery that not all former slaveholders are Legrees, she writes a letter home to Boston which describes her new neighbours as "universally shiftless" and irresponsible but not without a certain quaint charm (RR 332). To her Northern friends and fellow members of the "Reform and Help Society," however, the letter serves as a sign that its author "was already succumbing to the very influence she repudiated" (RR 333).

The South is an enigma, and Blair Cary, the conventional plantation belle, personifies all that is peculiarly Southern. By 1890, Page evidently no longer thought it wise to accept the implications of a symbolic union between Blair and Lawrence Middleton. While Page pledged himself to a continued regional distinctiveness and even, as we shall see, to a sacred mission for the South in the future of the nation as a whole, it was not to be a special status founded in self-consciousness of the defeat which Middleton recalls. Instead of tragic heroism, Page offers victorious Southern masculinity, in the person of Steve Allen, as the symbolic foundation of the region's reconciliation with the national valorization of conquest and success.

The marriage of Steve Allen and Ruth Welch forms one part of Page's answer to the need for a neutral territory on which irreconcilable regional differences could mingle without significant friction. The satisfactory conclusion of the painfully difficult romance between Jacquelin Gray and Blair Cary forms the other. Everything in Red Rock comes in pairs of opposites. Steve Allen marries a southernized northern bride;

and Blair finally marries a northernized version of the traditional Southern gentleman. It is advisable to see this second half of Page's reconciliation plot first in the context of another pair of opposites.

The carpetbagger Jonadab Leech, like all other Northerners in Red Rock, fails to understand how the South works. Under the pretense of advancing universal progress toward democratization, Leech reverses the traditional social order in Red Rock county, placing the former slave above the former master without regard for the capacity of the once governed to govern themselves. As a foreseeable consequence, Leech himself must come to fear the forces he has unleashed. At a time of populist revolt and widespread labor unrest in the United States, Page fills his novel with descriptions of unruly, irrational mobs, workers refusing to work, easily lead by flamboyant agitators but just as easily restrained by forceful assertions of authority. Both in the social reforms he implements and in his personal ambition, Leech takes the American dream of unlimited self-realization to dangerous extremes. Leech desires nothing but power and ultimately, walking menacingly among the crowd with the "Statutes of the United States of America" clutched under his arms, he becomes synonymous with power.

The appropriately named Leech is the complete opposite of the true healer Dr. Cary. Leech represents the worst aspects of an American nation created in the image of northern go-getting, predatory individualism; Cary, the selfless, detached gentleman, represents the best of the Old South. If Leech is complete corruption, Cary is total innocence; if Leech causes the dissolution of all traditional social values, Cary stands for stability and order. And yet, though Cary is part of the solution to the difficulties that besiege the South and the nation, he is also part of the problem.

Even as Leech's power in the county is still in the ascent, Dr. Cary, accompanied by the feisty General Legaie, travels to the national capital to plead the interest of his

people with the government. The city reflects the rapid changes taking place in the nation, everywhere except in the South, kept in poverty and stagnation by ruthless men like Leech. Cary and Legaie feel themselves transplanted into an alien world: ". . . as if it had been a foreign capital. The handsome streets and busy thoroughfares filled with well-dressed throngs; . . . all the insignia of wealth, appeared all the more brilliant from the sudden contrast" (RR 242). The two Southerners perceive their dislocation keenly. "We are like lost souls on the banks of the Styx," Cary observes, ". . . And to think that our grandfathers helped to make this nation!" (RR 243) But the symbol of the new urbanized America and Golden Age prosperity and progress is also thronged with beggars. Cary is torn between consciousness of his own poverty and his equal sense of obligation to hand out what little he has to the poor of the city who accost him. But behind this touching self-awareness of the incongruity between his gentility and his impecunity, behind the recognition of how far the two sections have grown apart since their common founding, there also lies Page's awareness that the splendid isolation of the plantation South from the struggle for wealth and power in the other part of the nation has led it into a dangerous provincialism.

Page was not ready, as a Faulkner would be, to confront the "lie" at the root of the old order on moral grounds. For him slavery was "sinful" only because its stubborn defense had led the Southern gentlemen to an irrational withdrawal from "universal progress." Cary and Legaie are not the only "lost souls" in urban America. Many of the poor in the streets are former slaves, one of whom, an old "servant" in Cary household, they meet: "You's de fust frien', master, I's seen since I been heah!" he says. "You are the first friend, John, I have seen," Cary replies. The dissolution of Arcady has left both members of the organic community stranded. The former slave and his master are co-sufferers in the "fire of exaction." The sentimentality of this scene is reminiscent of

Page's numerous short stories about the "good ole' days," but even if John, as we are to believe, would gladly exchange his new freedom in the prospering city marketplace for a return to slavery and its security from the cash nexus under the protection provided by his benevolent master, Dr. Cary is not able to do more for him now than to hand him a bank-note, probably his last one.

Cary is clearly out of place in the world after the abolition of slavery. His virtues remain admirable, yet in post-slavery society their expressions become only impotent gestures, void of social significance. His sense of honor prevents him from disobedience and rebellion against the law, even though that law is patently corrupt. His pride keeps him from appealing for help to a powerful friend, his former college classmate, Senator Rockfield, until it is almost too late. He suffers indignities and abuses as he had lived his life during its zenith, nobly and unselfishly; but for the master without slaves those very same qualities merely measure his tragic powerlessness. His complete aversion to business matters prevents him from making a living as a physician after the war. Forced to collect bills in order to find the funds for the exorbitant property taxes imposed by Leech, Cary instead distributes what he has to those in greater need. Cary, who strove to heal the wounds of sectional differences before the war, finally cannot heal himself. Perhaps the most memorable sign of Cary's inability to function in the world beyond the plantation garden is his innocence of all corruption, a primary entitlement to racial superiority. Cary is simply unable to recognize Hiram Still's true motives. He persists in believing that Still makes his loans to the county gentry out of loyalty and remains completely blind to the scalawag's hatred for his former employer and all gentlemen.

Interestingly, these stultifying blindspots do not afflict the women in Page's aristocratic families. Neither Mrs. Cary nor Mrs. Gray shares her husbands' conviction

that Still's money lending is genuinely altruistic. Both gentlemen are inclined to regard Still, the overseer, as a prop to the old order, a man who conveniently takes it upon himself to deal in the market place so that his employer does not have to. Misconstruing Still's willingness to engage in business enterprise as a sign of his faithful assent to the gentlemanly ideal, the two unworldly gentlemen miss Still's driving ambition. Their wives do not. Similarly, while Cary can not, even under extreme duress, bring himself to sell his work at a market price, Cary's daughter suffers no loss of self worth when she supports the family by selling preserves and teaching school. On the contrary, Blair becomes more heroic for her work.

In Cary's death Page elevates his model of the old-order gentleman to an almost sacramental dimension. Leech has suffered a seizure and is seriously ill. Even though he knows that he has already overexerted himself, Dr. Cary answers the call of Leech's desperate wife and saves the villain, at the cost of his own life. History has bypassed Dr. Cary. He can not heal his native land's physical wounds, but he can heal its spirit by serving as a model of perfect honor and virtue. Cary and along with him the now lost society in which he represented an ideal of manhood transcend history and pass into the realm of myth. What the generations of gentlemen who follow will have to acquire is the one quality Cary has lacked, the ability to change.

In an essay published in 1892, between the earliest drafts of Red Rock and its final version, Page injects a similarly dark tone into a portrait of the plantation as *locus amoenus*. "Social Life in Old Virginia" includes a conventionally idyllic picture of the plantation household, but the sunny image is overshadowed by an oppressive sense of brooding and stagnation. In the essay, Page describes three generations of pre-Civil War gentleman planters. The grandfather, who lived during the Revolutionary era, had been "a performer in the greatest work of modern times, with the shadow of the scaffold

over him if he failed." His son, who inherited the contradictions produced by the father's work, is no longer a man of action, as he must ponder the "weighty problems of the new government, with ever many unsolved questions to answer." The third generation, the one to which Cary belongs, is finally confronted with the full force of the problems of the past:

> The greatness of the past, the time when Virginia had been the mighty power of the New World, loomed ever above him. . . . He saw the change that was steadily creeping on. The conditions that had given his class their power and prestige had altered. The fields were worked down, and agriculture that had made his class rich, no longer paid. . . . He was "holding the wolf by the ears." Outside influences hostile to his interest were being brought to bear. Any movement must work him injury.
> ("Social Life" 190)

The picture surrounding the last gentleman in the Old South evokes the traditional plantation landscape already in the twilight of its splendid immunity to change. The gentleman of Dr. Cary's generation sits "on the long veranda in the dusk of the summer nights, with his wide fields stretching into the gloom and the 'woods' bounding the horizon, [while] his heart dwelt upon serious things" ("Social Life" 191). Page saw in the history of his native state during the nineteenth century the mark of a crucial irony: Virginia gentlemen had been at their best when they had put their shoulders to the wheel of the "universal progress" toward democratization and the development of market capitalism in America that ultimately caused their doom.

But the tragic decline and death of the Old South along with its passage into the ahistorical sphere of timeless myth - the story of Dr. Cary in other words - is only one part of Red Rock. Of at least equal importance is the reintegration of the South into the mainstream of American history - the story of Steve Allen and Jacquelin Gray.

In the essay "Social Life in Old Virginia," the sons of the last old-order gentlemen embody a final stage in the decline from the distant ancestor's practical ambition. Page describes the typical young gentlemen as "much given to self-indulgence," conservative to an excess of intolerance, "wasteful of time and energies beyond belief," "addicted to the pursuit of pleasure," and "blind to opportunities which were priceless" (192). He is quick to add that they also "possessed in full measure the corresponding virtues" but those are significantly mobilized only when "the languid, philandering young gentlemen of Virginia at the crucial time suddenly appeared as the most dashing and indomitable soldiery of modern times" (193). They are then also victims of the lethal irony that Southern gentlemen reach their highest potential for self-realization when they are most self-destructive. To evade that irony, Page casts Steve Allen in the role of his modal ancestor. Allen, who is initially a perfect example of the excessively hedonistic, "philandering" young gentleman, becomes a "type" of the revolutionary "grandfather" in his heroic fight against the oppressive "colonial" government of Leech, a battle carried out "under the shadow of the scaffold" and, unlike the Civil War itself, crowned with success. The struggle against the carpetbagger regime thereby reveals its potential as a truly American legend, a founding myth of order forged from chaos.

Jacquelin Gray, however, Allen's younger cousin, reflects more directly the "divided mind" of the New South. Allen is the more heroic of the two, more convincingly the man of action, but Gray is a moderate, the virtue Page prized most highly in Dr. Cary. To make Gray's conciliatory outlook on the prospect of reunification convincing, Page spirits him away from the county for much of the action. While Gray travels abroad to recover from a war wound, Leech's worst abuses take place at home, the Carys are forced to leave Birdwood, and Still takes possession of Red Rock plantation. When Gray returns, he sees his native region from a perspective that

closely resembles that of Mr. Welch, the sympathetic Northerner, who arrives in the county at nearly the same time to purchase land and a house for his family. Both are struck with the countryside's utter desolation and the poverty and dispiritedness of its inhabitants. Upon coming home, Jacquelin is moved by the great change that has come over the county during his absence: "The fields were more grown up; the houses more dilapidated." This change seems to him "greater even than that which had taken place during the war" (RR 255). Welch remembers the "fine plantations and pleasant homesteads" he had visited before the war. Even during the war, he had fought a battle here "amid orchards and rolling fields and pastures," where there is now "nothing but a wilderness" (RR 276).

Gray's prolonged stay abroad has enabled him to see his homeland from two points-of-view at once - that of the native who understands intimately "how the South works" and that of the rational outsider who is not blinded by partisanship in the way Steve Allen and, to a degree, Dr. Cary have been. While Steve Allen's role as the revolutionary rebel against Leech's unjust government always remains at odds with his equal devotion to a kind of leisurely detachment from the seriousness of his "cause," Jacquelin Gray combines the essential virtues of the gentleman according to the tradition, purposefulness together with a certain degree of indifference, more comfortably. Most importantly, Gray demonstrates a capacity for work that Allen lacks. In the law practice shared by the two, it is Gray who devotes most of his attention to business. The rest of his time he spends engaged in legal detective work to prove that Still's claim to the Gray family plantation is unlawful. Steve Allen is also capable of determined and purposive action, but his periods of valorous exertion tend to come in fits an starts. In between "crucial times," when, for instance, he gathers his band of nightriders to disarm Leech's

black militia or to punish the witch doctor Moses for having frightened Miss Welch, he is very much given to idleness and languid dissipation.

One can not help but wonder how much Page was aware that he had removed Allen from the trap of one irony only to deliver him into the snares of another. Steve Allen, it seems at times, uses his fight against the tyrant Leech merely to avoid boredom and meaninglessness, and thus the evils of Reconstruction become a welcome extension of the heroic conflict that went before and that had, as Page writes, "blinded" those who fought in it "for any lesser light" (RR 49). It is not difficult to recognize in Steve Allen the Faulknerian man of action, the younger Bayard Sartoris for example, unvanquished by all but his own need for "crucial times."

Jacquelin Gray clearly anticipates the hero of GordonKeith. When Gray first returns to the county, he has in his mind a vision of "a re-united country in which the people of both sides, retaining all the best of both sides, should vie with each other in building up the nation, and should equally receive all its benefits" (RR 257). This vision is conceptualized in the romance of Gordon Keith. In Red Rock Page looks more toward the past than to the future for the neutral territory on which the reunited nation can stand.

In the great hall of Red Rock hangs the portrait of the first Jacquelin Gray, the ancestor of the young man whom Hiram Still cheated of his inheritance. The founder had been a scholar and a soldier in Oliver Cromwell's army during the English civil war. He fell in love with the daughter of a Cavalier, lost his fortune, and fled with his bride to the new world, where his wife was soon afterwards murdered by Indians. According to family legend, the original Jacquelin Gray avenged himself quickly and the blood of the wife's murderer is said to have stained a large boulder from which Red Rock derived its name. The "Indian Killer's" portrait hangs above the hearth he himself built and around

which succeeding generations of Jacquelin Grays constructed the mansion where the last of the line was born. The painting, which shows the founder in front of the red-stained rock, his broken rifle at his feet, and on his face "an expression of such determination that one knew at once . . . he had been a master," symbolizes the permanence of the Grays' claim to ownership of this land and gives their family history a tragic depth (RR 26). It is framed in "straight black boards apparently built into the wall, as if it had been meant to stand there and cut him [the "Indian Killer"] off from all the rest of the world" (RR 27). This portrait, an enduring reminder of the price paid by the first Jacquelin for his flight from the historical convulsions of European civilization and his hopes to find domestic happiness and restored prosperity in the wilderness, serves also as link between the first crime against the Grays, the murder of the mother of the race, and the latest crime, Still's theft of the land that the blood sacrifice had bought.

Another legend, sustained primarily by the Grays' slaves, claims that the picture of the "Indian Killer" falls from its place above the hearth whenever the family's fortunes are in imminent peril. Several years before the war, the picture becomes dislodged and uncovers behind it a recess containing a number of old documents. Major Gray, young Jacquelin's father, orders Still to restore the portrait to its place but not before he has added to the vault another document, a substantial bond on his entire property. He had entrusted it to his overseer who was charged with the purchase of another plantation in the lower South. But Still, shrewd enough to carry out his mission without the use of the bond, had just returned it faithfully. With the proverbial lack of practical sense associated with the antebellum gentleman and an even greater lack of distrust in human nature, Major Gray had placed his entire confidence in Still, whose motives, however, turn out to be less than honest. Years later, when the portrait falls a

second time, Still happens again to be present. He remembers the bond, manages to steal it, and uses it after the war to dispossess his former employer's wife and sons.

The mystery of the stolen bond and its eventual recovery, with the help of a red paint stain left on the paper when it was first placed into the recess behind the picture, is an important structuring device in the novel's plot. But beyond the functional utility of holding together the iterative proliferation of incident upon incident in which the story moves from peaceful stasis to chaos and, finally, to restored order, the plot elements associated with the "Indian Killer" also have an important symbolic significance. The last Jacquelin Gray is said to resemble his distant ancestor so closely that Hiram Still is several times frightened nearly out of his mind when he mistakes his personal nemesis for the ghost of the founder. Both in his physical appearance and in his quest for revenge, Jacquelin Gray is associated more closely with the "Indian Killer" than he is with his father, the ineffectual, honorable and valorous but naive Major who failed to protect his family's interest because he was blind to the presence of evil in his own household. Jacquelin's eyes have been opened, and he perceives the enemy as well as the necessary course of action as clearly as his forefather had perceived his duty to avenge his wife's murder.

The "Indian Killer" is perhaps Page's most effective reunification symbol. According to a theory that had gained widespread popular acceptance by 1860, but which long outlasted the war era itself, the differences that divided American society and culture into two distinct civilizations, one in the North and one in the South, were "at least partly a matter of blood." This theory held, as William R. Taylor explains, that "the North had been settled by one party to the English Civil War, the Roundheads, and the South by the other, . . . the Cavaliers. The Yankee was a direct descendant of the Puritan Roundhead and the Southern gentleman of the English Cavalier" (xv). In Red

Rock, Page contradicts the legend to deemphasize the depth of sectional differences and thus to promote the spirit of reconciliation. The first Jacquelin Gray was a Commonwealth man, a Roundhead, but his descendants are nevertheless true Southern gentlemen. The ancestor of the Red Rock Grays is the ur-Anglo Saxon American founder, who seeks refuge in the wilderness from the economic decline and social persecution that beset him in European civilization. The Bostonian Welch is particularly spellbound by the portrait of the founder, which strikes him as "allegorical and yet . . . intensely human" and somehow, because of its starkness and its artless black frame, more "real" than the other pictures in the Gray family portrait gallery, all of which are surrounded by "richly gilded and carved" frames (RR 27). The differences in the pictures displayed in the great hall testify not only to the increasing prosperity of successive generations of Grays but also to an increased artificiality and detachment from the American frontier landscape in which the first Jacquelin had sought sanctuary. And for the last Jacquelin Gray the circumstances that forced him to defend the sanctity of his ancestral hearth have indeed changed dramatically. The first of the line had fled civil war and conquered the wilderness; the last faces the consequences of that conquest. His enemy is not the wilderness but a type of the historical struggle his forefather had left behind.

As in Steve Allen, who recalls the revolutionary gentleman's resistance to tyranny, Page reveals in Jacquelin Gray his interpretation of the Reconstruction period as the closing of a cycle in American history. Yet both cycles effectually bracket out the mythical Old South, revoking instead founding moments, "crucial times," in the assertion of Anglo-Saxon mastery over wilderness, other races, and anti-democratic alien interests, that lie in a common American past, outside of the Southern self-consciousness associated with the period before the Civil War. David M. Potter

explains that beginning with about 1911, American historians came to identify the South's quintessential regional characteristics with the democratic agrarian ideal that had been envisioned by Thomas Jefferson. The hierarchical South of Calhoun and Jefferson Davis was, according to this view, "a kind of deviation or detour in the true course of Southern history" (35). The "agrarian premise," as Potter calls it, has served to "reduce the factor of biracialism and caste to secondary importance, or even kept it out of sight altogether" (36). Ellen Glasgow is perhaps the first major Southern literary figure to have articulated the "agrarian premise" in fiction, similarly removing the issue of race and caste to marginal significance, but Thomas Nelson Page's bypassing of the Old South in his rediscovery of American origins for the Southern gentleman already points the way toward that coming reassessment of Southerness.

Page's characterization of Steve Allen and Jacquelin Gray implies a rejection of the father generation and a subsequent search for an alternative sense of selfhood in the young gentlemen of the post-war generation. Steve Allen is an orphan at the beginning of the novel, but with the aid of one of Page's most "sentimental" plot contrivances, he does not remain parentless. His father had fallen during the Mexican war and his mother had succumbed to a fever soon after her husband's death. Major Gray, who had fought side by side with Allen's father in Mexico, adopted the boy and brought him home to Red Rock where he quickly became the special favorite of Miss Thomasia, a spinster aunt also living in the Gray household. A few months after the Civil War, Thomasia reveals to Steve that she had once been deeply in love with his father but had refused her hand in marriage because of the elder Allen's intemperate habits. She has been moved to this revelation because she has noted the same besetting vices, the fondness for drink and gambling, in the son. To honor Thomasia's motherly love, Steve reforms and thus becomes what his father might have been had it not been for his weaknesses.

Jacquelin Gray is also cast in a different mold from that of his honorable, benevolent, but weak and ineffectual father and Dr. Cary, and the resemblance to the first of the line is more than merely physical. His search for the land bond, which bears in red paint the imprint of his younger brother's foot, is inextricably connected with the blood of the savage murderer whose death named the land Jacquelin inherited and with the red stained hearth the first Jacquelin had build for his wife and from which Still had stolen the paper. Still's crime is the Indian's crime and Jacquelin's revenge is, like that of his forefather's, more meaningful than the heroic but essentially futile defense of honor in which Gray's father gave his life on a Civil War battlefield; it is an assertion of the indisputable mastery the Major had lost. Jacquelin's successful dual quest in the sentimental romance plot, for the recovery of his land and for the hand of Blair, whom he leads home to the hearth at the end of the novel, also closes a cycle in the personal history of the Gray family. Jacquelin's and Blair's happiness, "as archaic and pure as that of our first parents, before modern wisdom discovered that the serpent was more than the devil, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil more than a tree of knowledge," fulfills belatedly the promise of Edenic tranquility the "Indian Killer" had not found in the wilderness (RR 579).

Political allegory and sentimental domestic romance fuse at the conclusion of Red Rock. The image of Southern chivalry (Steve Allen) is rescued from prosecution (in what is not at all an unrealistic perception on Page's part) by a romantic late century North (Ruth Welch); by that union, ruthless and self-interested radicalism (Jonadab Leech) is defeated, and so the essence of Southern civilization (Blair Cary) is finally reconciled with a new South, determined to take its place in the national dedication to progress (Jacquelin Gray). The new South, equally devoted to economic competition and the traditional values of home, family, and the sanctity of marriage, is possibly even

more Edenic than the old one since the serpent (the economic sin of slavery) has been banished. With mastership no longer propped up by an artificial and for slaveholding gentlemen debilitating institution but founded on "natural" superiority by birth, race, and cultivation, Red Rock recovered promises to become another organic society, centered in the gentleman's home on the hill from which prosperity, political stability, and moral order proceed in aggregate.

Page was looking for a way to conceptualize a model of the Southern gentleman for a market society. Because Red Rock without slavery was to be at once an agricultural enterprise embedded in the capitalist marketplace and a bulwark against the commodification of traditional pre-capitalist values, the New South gentleman had to be, in a sense, a cross between Dr. Cary and Jonadab Leech. He possessed the latter's will to power and practical ambition, moderated by the former's detachment from self-interest. In Red Rock Page turned to the past, albeit the past before the gentleman ideal in the South became a defense mechanism against the pressures exerted by abolitionism, to find such models. Page recalls strong men of action, most unlike the revolutionary gentleman's grandson, brooding on his veranda at dusk, or Dr. Cary after the war, a man of perfect honor but unable to reconcile his sense of self-worth with the need to make a living. What Page wanted is, in other words, to restore to the gentleman ideal completeness in the sense that William Wirt had understood it and described it in his biography of Patrick Henry (Rainard 299). Page's novels are in their way the best support for Lyn Rainard's argument that Arthur Butler and "Horse-Shoe" Robinson (in Kennedy's Horse-Shoe Robinson), Frank Lee and Joe "Red" Jarvis (in Caruthers' The Knights of the Golden Horsehoe) and Porgy and Sergeant Millhouse (in Simms' Woodcraft) were meant to illustrate complementary and not competing virtues in the Southern gentleman ideal (Rainard 301).

R. Lyn Rainard is also correct in insisting that the Southern ideal of manhood has always embraced what Richard Slotkin described as the "'myth of the frontier' - the conception of America as a wide-open land of unlimited opportunity for the strong, ambitious, self-reliant individual to thrust his way to the top" (Slotkin 5). But insofar as this conception constitutes an affirmation of the efficacy of work to change reality and to achieve one's independence from predetermined, inherited social and economic castes, the presence of the slave necessitated a denial of that power to his labor and ultimately to work itself. To underline the non-exploitative nature of slavery, Southern apologists emphasized the gentleman's indifference to economic opportunity and stressed the inviolability of even the physical boundaries around the plantation itself, asserting the permanence of the once established clearing in the wilderness.

Jacquelin Gray's exchange of the genteel Cavalier type for the strong, masterful frontier type as a father model is particularly interesting in the context of the paradigm shift in Southern literature that separates Pageian romanticism from the critical realism of the renascence. One is reminded, for instance, of William Faulkner's reaction against his own weak father and his decision to pattern himself after his great-grandfather, Colonel William C. Falkner, a strong and determined man of action (Minter 11). In a literary variation of the same motif, Jack Burden, in Warren's All The King's Men (1946), discovers that his real father is not the "good, weak" Scholarly Attorney but the "strong, evil" Judge Irwin (354). One can measure the distance between Thomas Nelson Page and Faulkner or Warren in the single word "evil," which for Page existed outside of the plantation garden while the later writers found it at the very center. Nevertheless, a number of "realistic" Southern novels on the road to or from Yoknapatawpha still engage in the Pageian search for a father figure who is both strong and good.

If Rainard's argument that the Southern gentleman ideal includes the qualities of both the Cavalier and the "transcendent Yankee" is indeed correct, the necessary virtues, exemplied, for instance, in Kennedy's "Horse-Shoe" Robinson, are not convincingly incorporated into the character of Jacquelin Gray, and Page must have realized he had not resolved the difficulties that had forced his predecessors to divide the "complete gentleman" into two characters in the first place. One might thus argue that Page's apparent change of mind about Hiram Still, who ends up owning about half of the Red Rock lands, shows that the former overseer has something the reinstated Jacquelin Gray will need if he is to overcome his father's ineffectiveness. Still has an undisputed talent for moneymaking; he was even before the war a shrewd businessman, invaluable to the Major when he used that talent in his employer's interest. There are mingled in Page's portrait of Hiram Still a strong horror of what will become known as Snopesism and a disguised admiration for the energy, the drive, the "frontier" mentality of Still's self-reliant strength. Page's attitude toward Still is uncharacteristically complex; the novel is generally dominated by moral absolutes. In Gordon Keith Page launched a final attempt to combine what he could not help but admire in Still with the Cavalier and present both in a single character.

But within a plot situation similar to that of Red Rock, Ellen Glasgow's The Deliverance approaches the Still type with less distaste. Glasgow's novel relates the conflict between the Blakes, owners of a tobacco plantation in upper Virginia, and Bill Fletcher, their former overseer. Like Still, Fletcher takes advantage of the political situation during Reconstruction to dispossess the Blakes and to become himself the master of Blake Hall. Though Glasgow makes the illegality of Fletcher's dealings far less clear than Page does that of Still's, the ambitious overseer is as much a villain in The Deliverance as Still is in Red Rock. But Glasgow's counterpart to Jacquelin Gray,

Christopher Blake, overcomes his consuming desire for revenge and finally recovers his inheritance by marrying Fletcher's granddaughter, Maria. It is interesting to note in this connection that the love that saves Glasgow's displaced gentleman is perplexingly foreshadowed in Red Rock. Still's daughter, Virgy, a pathetically touching creature with no talent to replace a Blair Cary as the "key" to Southern civilization, is deeply in love with Jacquelin Gray. But while Virgy, whose very name signifies her shortcomings as the traditional symbol of romantic Virginia, never learns to adjust to life at the manor and thus Blair Cary remains the appropriate bride for the gentleman, Glasgow's Maria Fletcher simply becomes a modernized version of Blair.

If a "Horse-Shoe" Robinson or a Hiram Still, though lacking the prerequisites of birth and cultivation, is to be seen as a component of the ideal rather than the antagonist to the Cavalier, it is significant that the Still/Fletcher type turns up again in later Southern fiction. Gideon Vetch, in Glasgow's One Man InHis Time (1922), and Willie Stark, in All The King's Men, have worked their way not alone into the planter's great hall but into the governor's mansion. In both novels the flamboyant demagogue draws a young Cavalier type into his influence and becomes the seminal force in his rebirth from a stultifying spiritual stasis. Conscious of himself as the last representative of a tradition whose loss of vitality he literally personifies, the last Cavalier is attracted to a man like Vetch or Stark, against all of his conditioned reflexes, because he embodies the energy that has been sapped from generations of gentlemen.

The defense of honor and the capacity for selfless heroism remain the character qualities by which the Pageian gentleman distinguishes himself from others who merely become what they do to make a living. But for the post-civil war gentleman as much as for the antebellum planter in Daniel Hundley's Social Relations, the distinction must manifest itself in action to remain meaningful. Hundley's planter, never compelled by

necessity to absorb himself in the pursuit of opportunity, still busied himself ceaselessly in demonstrations of his capacity, so that anything, the threat of a slave uprising or the alligator in the swamp, could be construed as an occasion for heroic defense. "Born Sartoris," says Faulkner's Elnora in "There Was A Queen," "or born quality of any kind ain't is, it's does" (732).

In Gordon Keith, Page takes his gentleman away from the pastoral garden and into the modern marketplace, fusing the gentlemanly identity, expressed in repeated acts of heroic honor, with practical business sense, a talent for moneymaking without becoming engulfed in the pursuit. Gordon Keith is Page's attempt to reconcile two antithetical myths - gentlemanly leisure and the gospel of work; the gentleman who "does" and the self-made-man who "becomes" through work.

THREE: Gordon Keith - The Gentleman in the Marketplace

In what he calls "the primary myth that [supported] Southern fiction for a generation," Lewis Lawson identified "two opposing clusters of images":

> One cluster pictures a chaotic, frenzied, acquisitive life fruitlessly performed by impotent automatons. The opposing cluster contains a conception of rural or semi-rural life enriched by tradition, religion, stable and predictable social behavior, and feelings of individual worth.
>
> (Lawson 12)

The text in which Lawson found those two clusters is I'll Take My Stand, the agrarian manifesto published in 1930. But he could have made the same observation about Thomas Nelson Page's Gordon Keith, published in 1903. Both the famous collection of essays and the romance about a young country-bred gentleman who makes his fortune but remains personally unsatisfied by his success employ the same images and propound the same arguments, and behind both stands the same sentimental, escapist ideology.

Gordon Keith begins, as did Red Rock, with a picture of plantation life before the war. Elphinstone, the ancestral home of the Keiths, is presented in all of the traditional imagery of isolation, tranquility, and "gracious entertainment." It is a rural haven, filled with the sounds and the signs of agricultural labor, performed, as it were,

by invisible hands. Though the novel's action rarely returns to Elphinstone after, in Page's biblical language, "it [had come] to pass that an invading army marched through the plantation" and Gordon Keith along with his widowed father were both "thrown out on the world" (GK 5), this lost garden of Eden always remains present as a contrast with the urban environment of New York where Gordon Keith tries to make his way after the expulsion. The vision of the ideal is preserved on the one hand by General Keith, the father, who remains "unmoved amid the wreck . . . of his world" (GK 34), and on the other by young Gordon himself, whose only patrimony is that he is "the son of a gentleman" (GK 3).

General Keith's admirable singlemindedness ("his one standard was that of a gentleman"), the estate's peaceful seclusion ("it was a world to itself"), its organic, stable social order ("[the General's] word had the convincing power of a law of nature"), the celebratory sounds of labor ("the ring of hammers, the clack of looms, . . . the hum of spinning-wheels"), performed not for the sake of commercial profit but "all for the plantation," (GK 3-5) form a sharp contrast with urban life in New York, where "business was the watchword, the trade-mark. It buzzed everywhere. . ." (GK 223). New York is "chaotic, frenzied, acquisitive," and it is, like Washington in Red Rock, a city of sharp contrasts between the wealth of some and the poverty of many others among the inhabitants. The "glitter" of "opulence, gilded and gleaming and dazzling," contrasts with images of "women with worn faces and garment unduly thin in the frosty air" (GK 224). In this city, work has only one objective, the pursuit of profit, and in its fashionable society, sexual partners are traded as freely as commodities are exchanged in the stock-market; who is in pursuit of whom is the primary topic of polite conversation. Everything has a market value in the city, and the price of the gilded opulence is

frequently, as one jaded member of that society laments, "fortune, health, peace, reputation" and worst of all "heartlessness" (GK 169).

And yet, the proud immunity to change and the tranquil relatedness of life at Elphinstone are not only the plantation's principal virtues and charms but also its gravest shortcomings. On his first journey to New York, Gordon Keith recognizes a desire and, in fact, a need to leave behind the gentle "counter-current . . . secluded from the general movement and progress of life" (GK 5) in which he had been drifting throughout his youth at Elphinstone and to "jump into" the "torrent" that is life in the city (GK 168).

Keith must leave Elphinstone after it has been sold to a New York financier, but having been, as Page himself had been, raised in its charmed isolation, he remains an extension of the place for life: "This plantation, then, was Gordon's world. The woods that rimmed it were his horizon, as they had been that of the Keiths for generations; more or less they always affected his horizon" (GK 5). It is the "more or less" which the plot, tracing Keith's education from Southern gentleman to "man of the world," explores and from which the its central irony emerges. The simple, uncluttered horizon of the plantation garden endows Keith with the columnar strength, the undisturbed sense of self he needs to succeed. He knows, as Walker Percy would later say of his "last gentleman's" great grandfather, "what [is] what and [acts] accordingly" (The Last Gentleman 16), never in doubt about who he is and what honor compels him to do. His patrimony, the identity of a gentleman, gives him the strength to leap into "the torrent" and to "swim against it," that is to enter the business world, the world of commodity values and universal trade, without confusing honor with profit, without "sinking the man into the business." But during a later stage, when Keith has made his fortune, he finds himself close to the point of penetrating beyond the "horizon" of a gentleman into

the world where what one does for a living determines who one is. Continuing the "torrent" metaphor, Page writes: "He was like a strong swimmer who, used to battling in heavy waves, grows stronger with the struggle and finds ever new enjoyment and courage in his endeavor" (GK 325). Page wanted to argue that it is possible to succeed in the world of market values without allowing that success to become one's ruling passion. Or, since Gordon Keith is in many ways an extension of the political theme introduced in Red Rock, a justification of continued Anglo-Saxon dominance in the post-Civil War South, Page sought to argue that it is possible to have a market society without thereby reducing all values to market values.

This determination shapes the plot of Page's most autobiographical novel. The first station in Keith's education is a mountain resort town, where Adam Rawson, a rustic country squire in the tradition of Irving and Kennedy, employs Keith as a schoolmaster at the Ridge College. Keith's struggle to beat sense (literally) into the heads of the mountaineers fills him at once with a feeling of satisfaction "that he was earning his own living" and with a determination to "be like Warren Hastings, and buy back the home of his fathers and be a great gentleman" (GK 72). On a walk through the romantic mountain wilderness of the Ridge area, Keith meets Alice Yorke, the daughter of a wealthy New York businessman, and falls in love with her. However, the relationship is hastily terminated by Alice's mother, because Keith lacks, as she puts it, an "establishment" in life. To her, though not to the young girl who immediately recognizes the Arthurian nobility in Keith's character, he is simply a country schoolmaster, a liaison with whom would compromise the girl's and the family's standing in New York's fashionable society. The mother has her eye instead on Ferdy Wickersham, heir to a large fortune that by now also includes Elphinstone. Gordon Keith is at first chagrined at having been so grossly misidentified as a mere country clod

and at having his pedigree, his noble father, and his still unimpaired standing as a member of the South's nobility snubbed by Mrs. Yorke who is interested only in present wealth and the future promise of more wealth, not in the past. But, as one might expect, Keith does not abandon his love for Alice; in fact, from the moment of his dismissal by Mrs. Yorke, Keith has found a new goal for his ambition, one that transcends even his desire to recover Elphinstone. Henceforth success to him is synonymous with the name of Alice Yorke. His dominant passion and sole motivation becomes to prove himself the equal of the Yorkes in wealth and in the eyes of their society.

Alice is whisked back to the city where the danger of exposure to excessively romantic and "unpractical" notions is smaller than in the South, and Keith moves on to the next stage in his education. He arrives in Gumbolt, a mountain hellhole that is just beginning to attract northern capital interested in exploiting the region's "virgin wealth" in mineral deposits. Keith is hired by Wickersham's agents to survey land for the construction of a railway into the remote area; and he does the job so well and in such short time (for a Southerner) that Wickersham invites him to New York to discuss further employment. Keith fancies himself already in possession of his prize when he enters New York for the first time in his life, but during the interview with Wickersham, it is precisely his patrimony, his sense of gentlemanly honor, that destroys his hopes. Wickersham explains that as his agent Keith will have to use his "best efforts" to secure the lands the company wants for its mines (GK 163). Several of the most valuable tracts are owned by Keith's old benefactor, Squire Rawson. Honor dictates that Keith act in the interest of the squire; the company demands a complete devotion to its, the opposite, interest. Honor wins and Keith parts with Wickersham.

The transformation of Keith's drive for wealth into a sexual quest allows Page to portray his gentlemanly hero as immersed in work, ambition, acquisitive enterprises without leaving the perimeter of his plantation horizon. The quest for Alice as the quest for Elphinstone is finite - as finite as the boundaries around the mythical plantation garden itself. Yet even while Page turns Keith into a veritable refutation of the South's reputation, undeserved Page asserts, for shiftlessness and indolence, even while Keith in Gumbolt quickly gains a reputation because of his devotion to work and his resistance to the charms of the local seductress, the dancer Terpsichore, even while all of this is designed to undermine the stereotypical image of the swaggering, pleasureseeking Southern beau, it becomes clear that Keith's quest for Alice must not succeed. To allow Keith to be driven to success and wealth because of a passion for the beautiful Alice Yorke is chivalrous and heroic. To allow him to marry Alice because he is wealthy and succesful is to debase the romantic relationship into a market relationship.

In fact, at the very moment when Keith seems again within reach of his desire, his quest appears to be thwarted permanently. Having lost his possible "establishment" as an agent in the employ of Wickersham, Keith returns to Gumbolt, where Squire Rawson, wanting to develop his own mining enterprise, appoints Keith as his representative. Once more, Keith believes himself to be near the final triumph: "Success had come. And its other name was Alice Yorke" (GK 216). But Alice has in the meantime given in to her mother's ambitions and agreed to marry Mr. Lancaster, a man who is her senior by many years but who is also immensely rich. "They talk about the sin of selling Negroes," the disappointed Keith observes when he hears of the marriage; "that is as very a sale as ever took place at a slave-auction" (GK 221).

Honor, of course, prevents Keith from following the example of Ferdy Wickersham, the novel's principal villain, who personifies the perversion of the spirit of

competition in business as well as in love. Wickersham desires only what another man possesses and pursues exclusively women who are married to other men. Keith decides instead to remove Alice Lancaster from his heart but to retain there as his inspiration the ideal of womanhood she represents. During the relatively brief period of Alice's ineligibility - she is quickly widowed and soon returns to society - Keith meets Lois Huntington, a cousin of Norman Wentworth, Keith's friend and Page's model of the good Yankee who is both a man of business and a gentleman. In Lois, Keith believes to have discovered a woman who fulfills every requirement of the ideal he carries in his heart. But once again, in accordance with the typical dynamics of this novel, gain is attended by loss. Lois, who later turns out to be Keith's long lost childhood playmate and his first innocent love, captures his attention as she does his heart, because her simplicity, purity, and frankness place her, as he too is placed, on the margin of fashionable New York. Once Alice has returned to society and its marriage market, Keith suddenly finds himself torn between the two women. If Alice was the primary force behind Keith's original ambition, his quest for recognition and status, and the prize for which he works, Lois now calls that ambition into question. Once again, Alice is within reach, but by now Keith has lost the certainty of his conviction.

In many ways, Lois Huntington is the counterpart to Ruth Welch, the southernized daughter of a Yankee gentleman in RedRock. Her father was a Union general who had moved South into the neighborhood of Elphinstone after the war and there befriended his former enemy, General Keith. But Lois' function in the plot differs significantly from that of Ruth Welch in Red Rock. The intersectional romance motif plays not even a minor part in Gordon Keith. A far greater concern than the reunification of North and South on a common ground is the contrast between the two worlds Lois Huntington and Alice Lancaster represent. Lois stands for rural simplicity

and purity, and she stands for the past. When Keith first sees her in the streets of New York, even before he recalls who she is, a vision of Elphinstone enters his mind. Everything about Lois Huntington reminds him of the country and the past, and Lois soon also becomes the declared favorite of Keith's father. Alice, on the other hand, represents urban society, class and wealth consciousness, and naturally, Keith's future, particularly because of the very fact that she stands for true virtue imprisoned in a corrupt world.

To emphasize the depravity of a society where status and power and even all private, sexual relationships are based on market values and wealth, Page stresses incessantly the vicissitudes of the market economy, the impersonal revolutions of fortune's wheel which turn profit into loss and therefore happiness into despair. Soon after Keith has assumed the management of the Rawson mines, the stock market declines and some of New York's richest, including Wickersham and Wentworth, face financial ruin. As Wickersham loses huge sums in Gumbolt, now renamed New Leeds, Keith manages to prosper. He even takes advantage of Wickersham's losses to buy back Elphinstone for his father. This should be a major event in Keith's life, but Page mentions the purchase almost in passing, a quick acknowledgement in a brief paragraph. Keith, forced by necessity out of the gentle countercurrent and into the torrent, has begun to identify himself with his struggle.

Keith has, in other words, become uncertain of his ends and begun to accept the means in their stead. While his fortune was yet uncertain, he had no doubts at all about himself and his goals: to regain Elphinstone and to win Alice. Now that he is prospering in business, he has lost that conviction of self. What Page wants his readers to confront is the irony of gain turned into loss, success into failure. The less certain Keith becomes of his goals and his sense of identity, the more he succeeds in his work.

Keith has always distinguished himself from the merely acquisitive business man by his willingness to sacrifice all, his fortune as well as his personal happiness, for the sake of honor. Congruent with the ironic vision of the novel, Keith's fidelity to the gentlemanly code of honor receives its greatest challenge at the moment of his greatest business triumph.

Keith has sold the Rawson properties to an English syndicate at tremendous profit for the Squire and for himself. At the same time, his friend Norman Wentworth faces the bankruptcy of his firm and he has already lost his domestic felicity thanks to the efforts of Ferdy Wickersham. Again, because of Wickersham's intrigue, Wentworth has unjustly blamed Keith for the breakup of his marriage. Thus Gordon Keith finds himself at a parting of the ways. He can use his new wealth to repay a debt of honor he owes Wentworth for having once saved his life and having later offered to pay for his education. And Keith would still have enough money to restore Elphinstone to its former splendor. But to Keith the thought of "how much he could do with the money it would take" to fulfill both pledges of honor, of how easily he could double his profit by investing it "judiciously," is suddenly much more tempting (GK 472). At the crucial moment, Page produces a *deus ex machina.* The old General arrives in New York to remind his son that the score of honor is not kept on a balancing sheet and that honor and family are not commodifiable values, and Gordon predictably decides to do the gentlemanly thing and saves his friend from ruin.

The incident shows, nevertheless, how far Gordon Keith has traveled from the plantation. If the General appears in the nick of time to save his son from choosing the business man's path over that of the gentleman, no such intervention is finally necessary when Keith, again ironically, decides to leave the city altogether just as he has begun to realize his greatest ambition. Once scorned as a country-clod by Mrs. Yorke, Keith

becomes one of the most eligible bachelors in New York society because of his financial successes. But when that society finally acknowledges him as one of its own - an old friend from the country even calls him "a fair counterfeit" of a "society man" - Keith recoils at his accomplishment (GK 515). He abandons the city and the dream of winning Alice's hand, satisfied that the ideal of business success without sacrifice of self is not realizable in that environment. Keith chooses the country, Lois Huntington, and his father's ideals instead.

Yet in this book of ironic reversals, the biggest irony of all was probably not intended by Page. If a modern market-society necessarily produces pervasive ambiguities by which loss and gain, fortune and misfortune, feed on each other to become ultimately indistiguishable and meaningless, Page's solution, the retreat into the country and recollection of old unchangeable values, dissolves itself into yet another ambiguity. We are told that Gordon, Lois, the General, and the Keiths' old friend Dr. Balsam will henceforth live together; but we are not told where they will make their new home. As in Red Rock, the gentlemanly hero recovers honor, innocence, and, above all, the values of home, family, and domestic love, but unlike Red Rock, Gordon Keith offers a new beginning without a concrete point of departure. It is conceivable that Keith and his bride have decided to move to Elphinstone, but the most reasonable surmise the plot permits is that Page envisioned a home that is centered on Elphinstone's limited horizon but also manages to contain at least some of New York's economic benefits. Such an answer would imply that Keith's spiritual home lies in a place like New Leeds, the Southern city that has already, according to Page's utopian vision, begun to rival New York, the North-Eastern city, as a thriving economic center. New Leeds resembles Gordon Keith himself; and New York resembles Mr. Lancaster, the man who had everything Keith ever wanted - wealth and rank and Alice Yorke - who

had everything but the one thing Keith had, the promise of future success. At the end of the novel, Keith has forsworn his original ambition to become the equal of New York society men, as New Leeds must somehow avoid becoming a mere mirror image of North-Eastern urban civilization. But just how the Southern city is going to succeed in evolving as a symbol of material progress while escaping the undesirable disintegration of traditional Southern folkways, Page declines to specify. Where else but in New York is the future of New Leeds foreshadowed, and where else but in the horizon bound counter-current to progress of plantations like Elphinstone does there lie a refuge for true gentlemen?

All of Page's fiction somehow points to this ambiguity at the end of Gordon Keith. And much of Southern fiction concerned with the survival of gentlemanliness in an unheroic world points back to it. As in Red Rock before, nothing really happens in Gordon Keith. There is no dramatic development according to the laws of probability; there is none of the textual openness we expect from good literature, in which characters reveal themselves in response to dramatic situations; characters in Gordon Keith reveal themselves only as either saved or damned according Page's soteriology of honor and gentlemanliness. There is certainly no realism in this novel; Page's portrait of New York society amounts to no more than a "cluster of images," as does his portrait of the South. The entire novel includes only two black characters, and both belong to the traditional "faithful retainer" type.

The essential plot dynamics of Gordon Keith replicate those of Red Rock. In both a complicated romance, in which the hero, after a long period of uncertainty or misjudgement, discovers the one he has loved all along, and a quest for home, a physical space that is also the soul's home, form the central action. The pattern of displacement, purifying love, and recovery of home is already familiar to readers of

antebellum plantation romances, and it also appears in Cable's John March, Southerner and in Glasgow's The Battle-Ground and The Deliverance. The same pattern even emerges again in much later derivations from the traditional Southern plantation novel, from Robert Penn Warren's All The King's Men to Walker Percy's The Second Coming.

Gordon Keith replicates Red Rock even to the extent that its plot organization is formed by two parallel levels of action, a public quest for an ideal of masculinity (the business ethic vs. the gentleman's code of honor) and a private quest for a corresponding ideal of femininity (Alice Yorke vs. Lois Huntington). Everything surrounding these two central lines of plot action is paradoxically predictable and improbable at the same time. Nothing happens; events repeat themselves in a pattern that is almost typological in its sequence of prophesy and fulfillment. Thus when Mrs. Yorke first rejects Gordon Keith as a suitable mate for her daughter, she does so despite the fact that she associates Keith with a vision from her own "dim past." During their first meeting, "a country boy with broad shoulders suddenly flashed before her" (GK 116). Gordon becomes her own husband, the self-made business man, reincarnate. During the Civil War, when General Keith is a special envoy in England and his son is injured in a private battle with Yankee boys only to be saved from drowning by one of the enemies, Norman Wentworth, Gordon has to learn his first lesson in debts of honor. Even as the General is attempting to explain why Gordon must master his injured pride and acknowledge the debt he owes Norman, the old gentleman too has a vision of the past, when he confronted an earlier Norman Wentworth in a duel over a "tall girl with calm blue eyes," the present Norman's mother. The General won the duel but lost the girl; but what he has "regretted . . . all [his] life" is his failure to overcome his pride and to reconcile himself with his adversary (GK 14). When, at last, Gordon comes to save

Norman's bank by depositing a large portion of his newly won fortune there, he repays not only his own but also his father's old debt. One of Gordon's mentors from the Ridge region, a country doctor named Balsam, has spent his life in exile from the great world into which he had once been driven by "foolish pride and a selfish ambition" (GK 100). He had paid for his passion for wealth and status with the loss of Abigail Brooke's love. It was Miss Brooke who upbraided Keith for his growing resemblance to New York "society-men," thus contributing to his resolve not to repeat Dr. Balsam's error. Keith repents before his "pride" and "ambition" separate him forever from Lois Huntington, who turns out, of course, to be Abigail Brooke's niece. Everything comes in pairs in this novel; the present echoes the past and what lies in between, the gulf of Civil War, is somehow meaningless.

The iterative proliferation of incident, "an essential property of the narrative" in Gordon Keith, as much as in the sentimental women's fictions of the 1840's and 50's, serves to establish the same binary opposition of values -- country-city, pride-honor, selfish ambition-heroic quest -- over and over again (Tompkins 134). The iterative structure also dominates the story of Gordon's own search for a spiritual home, a space where love and honor can coexist in the way they had before the war, before the loss of the plantation garden.

When Gordon first meets Alice Yorke in a country road of the Ridge region, she is giving away her golden bracelet to a ragged child. The scene immediately reminds Gordon of an earlier one, in England, when he first saw Lois Huntington, as she was handing her favorite doll to a beggar child. Gordon falls in love with Alice, we understand, because of the way in which she echoes the image of his first love. If Gordon Keith eventually becomes, as Abigail Brooks observes, a "fair counterfeit" of a New York society man, it is primarily because Alice Yorke, whose name is in Keith's

mind synonymous with success and social recognition, is or once was a "fair counterfeit" of Lois Huntington. Before Mrs. Yorke puts an end to their romance, Alice and Keith spend long afternoons on the veranda of the mountain resort hotel. As Alice sees Keith against the background of Arthurian romance, he "fancie[s] her the 'maid of the downward look and sidelong glance'" (GK 99). At the end of his long and mistaken quest for that ideal in Alice, Gordon finds Lois Huntington awaiting him on the same porch and he remembers the earlier scene distinctly: "the white figure reclining there; and the boy that talked of his ideal of loveliness and love. She was there now; it seemed to him that she had been there always, and the rest was merely a dream" (GK 546).

Gordon Keith manages paradoxically once again to win what he has always desired even as he, in the same instant, renounces his love for the woman who has always embodied that desire for him. Lois Huntington is now Alice Yorke, who never left the Ridge, who never returned to the city to marry Mr. Lancaster. Keith's love for Alice once redoubled his determination to commit himself to work and mobilized his ambition for economic power. That determination and that ambition Page knew, as well as Grady did, to be prerequisite attributes to the character of the post-war Southern gentleman, who had no choice but to compete in the capitalist marketplace under the terms of the North-Eastern "standard." Yet how alien that "standard" is to the traditional concept of gentlemanliness Gordon Keith demonstrates forcefully, for he becomes increasingly attracted to it and, in accordance with the pledge Grady made in 1886, falls "in love with work." Thus he begins to confuse the end for which he works with the means toward that end and is clearly attracted to both. As a result, he is even tempted to prefer profit to honor, before the old General appears to restore him to the path of gentlemanliness. Page resolves the problem of the reconciliation between the gentlemanly standard of honor and the seemingly antagonistic demands of the

marketplace, which the gentleman must, nevertheless, also somehow satisfy, on a purely symbolic level, failing or declining to offer a concrete social solution that would transcend the limits of the romance plot. In Lois Huntington Keith is finally united with a woman who represents a complete antithesis to Alice Yorke, a rejection, in fact, of the ambition through which Keith sought to win Alice's hand by proving himself the equal of any New York society man, but who is, at one and the same time, a reincarnation of the image that had inspired Keith's drive for success in the first place. In recalling Keith's first passion, Lois Huntington symbolizes promise of sexual (and economic) conquest that Alice long held for him; but she also symbolizes, because she is in fact not Alice but a woman who is not to be won through the achievement of social status or economic success, Keith's final indifference to that impulse to conquer. Though Lois Huntington is not a Blair Cary, cut in the mold of the mythical plantation belle, she does at the conclusion of the novel come close to that image when she is revealed as the embodiment of allurement and resistance. The ideal is, as it had been for generations of Southern gentlemen, to hold both in perfect balance.

Fred Hobson observes correctly that in Gordon Keith "Page sought to explore as he really had not before the essence and meaning of gentleman" (151). A gentleman never dissolves the balance of potential and indifference completely. The potential becomes actual, when duty, honor, selfless pride, not mere desire for the rewards, compel him. Therefore, the more successful Keith becomes in New York, the more anxious his consciousness of the difference between himself and the bankers and speculators he despises. "Sometimes it had come to him that he might be caught by the current and might drift into the same spirit, but self examination . . . had reassured him. He knew that he had other motives" (GK 367). To allow Keith to fulfill is dream of winning Alice Yorke would of course rob him of those "other motives." He would

become truly indistinguishable from the shallow materialists of New York society. To deny him success indefinitely would render those motives meaningless, leaving again nothing but wealth itself as his tangible end. By separating Alice from the ideal Keith pursues and replacing her with Lois Huntington, Page manages to avoid both traps.

Page wanted to transform the traditional Southern or Virginia gentleman into an American hero, a model of masculinity combining the best of both worlds. The pastoral ideal, which the plantation in Page's mind truly did embody, was lost forever after its economic foundation in slavery had been destroyed. The anti-pastoral world of the modern city offered Page a convenient counterbalance of vices to set off the principal virtues of the lost order. The closest Page comes, outside of Gordon Keith's character itself, to a concretization of a middle ground, a place where vigorous pursuit of economic progress flourishes in freedom from urban society's depravity, is perhaps Gumbolt-New Leeds, where cowpastures conceal virgin mineral wealth and industrial potential remains interlaced with the relatedness of folk culture and frontier exuberance.

Theodore L. Gross sees the theme of Gordon Keith too narrowly, suggesting that Page had hoped to write a book that would be recognized as in tune with the mainstream of current literary fashions. "He writes his 'novel of manners'," Gross comments, "in an age when the vanity of wealth is a favorite subject of American novelists. . . ." Yet the praise of rural America over the culturally disjointed urban America industrialization and foreign immigration have produced is unconvincing, Gross maintains, because Page "grounds his theme exclusively on the concept of Southern heroism" (119). In reality, the "Americanness" of Gordon Keith derives from deeper roots than Page's inept borrowing of fashionable literary attitudes. It resides primarily in Page's exploitation of the myth of Anglo-Saxon power in American cultural and political life, which, especially after the abolition of slavery in the South, shaped the

desires and anxieties of ruling classes in both parts of the reunited nation. Nor does the novel's theme ground itself "exclusively" on the ideals of the traditional Southern code of heroic, gentlemanly conduct. Though Keith requires rescue at times from losing sight of his "different motives," there can be no doubt that Page sees in him a kind of model American, an archetypal conjunction of Northern and Southern notions about society and its work. Keith is a Southern hero who has internalized the entire plantation order and become, in Page's conceptualization, a representative American hero.

Page frequently stresses Keith's dual identity as a gentleman (defined by the horizon line of the plantation) and an American (defined by the Protestant work ethic). For example, during Keith's second journey to England (the iterative complement to the earlier scene in which the gentlemanly Yankee Norman Wentworth defends the gentlemanly rebel Gordon Keith because both are, after all, gentlemanly Americans), he is introduced to a company that includes Alice Lancaster, the wealthy American widow, and the Earl of Steepleton, an impecunious, idle English gentleman. The Earl recognizes in Gordon a potential rival and inquires of Alice:

> "What is he?"
> "A gentleman."
> "Yes." The Englishman took the trouble again to put up his monocle and take a fleeting glance across the table. "He looks it," he said. "I mean what does he do? . . ."
> "All your men do something, I believe?" said the gentleman.
> "All who are worth anything," assented Mrs. Lancaster.
> "No wonder you are a rich people."
> Something about his use of the adjective touched her.
> "Our people have a sense of duty, too, and as much courage as any others, only they don't make any to-do about it. I have a friend - a gentleman - who drove a stage-coach through the mountains for a while rather than do nothing, and who was held up one night and jumped from the stage on the robber, and chased him down the mountains and disarmed him." (GK 363-4)

The Earl knows that to be American means to do something, to make one's living by working. And Alice, conscious of the Englishman's class snobbery, reminds him of the difference between the American gentry and the effete English nobility. Americans work not because of the allure of wealth alone. Work is a fulfillment of duty, a "calling." It is the response to duty, but not the performance of work itself nor the nature of the work performed, that creates American nobility. Work is heroic performance of duty and the greater the sacrifice of status to work the greater the heroism. No greater worker, no greater sacrifice, can be conceived than the gentleman who drives a stage-coach without loss of honor or dignity. The American gentleman is defined by his need to "do something," not by what he does. Daniel Hundley's Southern gentleman of leisure - always busy without ever having anything to do - and his opposite, the acquisitive Yankee - always having something to do without ever clearly understanding the ends for which he works - are practically indistinguishable.

The effects of leisure, in the sense of freedom from any coercion to work at all, are illustrated in the next scene. Keith's host in England is Grinnell Rhodes, a hardworking Yankee engineer who recently married the daughter of one of New York's wealthiest bankers. (One could easily draw an interesting comparison between this and Page's own marriage in 1893 to the wealthy Mrs. Field.) Through his marriage, Rhodes has been rewarded with what appears to be the crown of achievement for any kind of work, the freedom from work altogether. Yet for the engineer the fulfillment of every hedonist's dream has turned into a nightmare. Rhodes confesses to Keith that he suffers greatly under his freedom to indulge in perpetual play:

> "Keith, this is killing me. Sometimes I think
> I can't stand it another day. . . ."
> "I was not born for this; I was born to <u>do</u>
> something. . . . I hope to live till I build one more
> big bridge or run one more long tunnel. Jove! To stand

> once more up on the big girders, so high that the trees look small below you, and see the bridge growing under your eyes where the old croakers had said nothing would stand!"
>
> (GK 365-6)

For Rhodes "freedom from toil and tillage" is tantamount to complete loss of meaning; and Gordon Keith has become his soulmate: "Keith's eyes sparkled, and he reached out his hand; and the other grasped it" (GK 366).

Keith is finally at home in both worlds; he has expanded, rather than abandoned, his plantation-bound horizon so that it encompasses the values of modern city life, work, the struggle for success and recognition. His fight to wrest profit from mines in the rugged mountains around Gumbolt, where the "croakers," New York bankers who scorned and scoffed him, said it could not be done, is the equivalent of Rhodes' dream to run bridges across the continent in spite of the odds. But the plantation horizon still manifests itself in Keith's character, especially when he has reached the zenith of his financial successes. In the months following his acquisition of wealth, Keith constantly, even obsessively, undergoes "self-examination" to determine the remaining strength of his "other motives: the trust reposed in him by his friends, the responsibility laid upon him, the resolve to justify that confidence" (GK 367). Here Keith resembles again Daniel Hundley's idealized Southern planter-gentleman, whose "busyness" is grounded on a sense of responsibility for communal welfare rather than personal success. Keith remains also entirely within the bounds of Page's own portrait of the gentleman in the "Old South." He displays the same strength, the same capacity for action and energetic work "at the crucial" moment, with the same detachment, the same curious indifference to success. One might even argue that the loss of the plantation, the loss of wealth and status, was fortunate for Keith, as it preserved him from the danger of meaningless that threatens Page's planter on his porch staring into the gloomy night.

The modern world of work, success, wealth, power, and recognition represents both an opportunity for self-realization and a temptation for Gordon Keith, an invitation to abandon his gentlemanly, plantation-bound self. Whenever the temptation grows "too overpowering," Keith leaves his office in New York and seeks refuge from the "torrent" in the rural South, where he can refresh himself in a "cool, limpid pool . . . [in] the calm and tranquil region that stretched beyond the moil and anguish of the strife for gain" (GK 515). In that pastoral homeland he is awaited by the General, who still leads a life that is at least outwardly the same as it had been before the war, and by Lois Huntington, who personifies for Keith the allure of the country, just Alice Yorke-Lancaster does that of the city.

Keith is clearly attracted to both. The city, business, industry, and progress, the "need to do something," to work for a living, define to a considerable degree the man he has become. Like most Americans in the age of industry and commerce, but unlike his predecessors in the romantic literary tradition of Southern gentlemen, Keith has become increasingly dependent on meaningful work, in the modern sense of the term as income generation, for a meaningful life. But his reliance on the performance of work as the main avenue toward an enhanced sense of self-worth is counterbalanced a different need, one that was probably shared by many among the novel's readers in 1903 whose personal experience had been affected by the transformation of rural America into an industrial society. Keith flees into the country from time to time because of his need to know and to know himself a part of the tradition of rural connectedness, of an organic undergirding beneath the structure of modern industrialism and its disconcerting cultural and social disjunctions, a tradition that remains untouched and still accessible, a "soul's home" and refuge from the struggle for money and power.

Fred Hobson has called Gordon Keith "a story in the American grain, rather than in the Southern grain" (150-1). Perhaps a more accurate description is to say that the novel paradoxically manages to be both. In Gordon Keith Page combines two heroic myths, both long held in reverence by popular American literary culture. Keith is a self-made man, in the tradition of Benjamin Franklin or Abraham Lincoln, emerging from isolation and obscurity to occupy a position of prominence and authority in society through his capacity for hard work and diligent effort. And he also recalls the solitary trailblazer in the wilderness, a man like Daniel Boone or Davy Crockett, relying on his own strength and cunning to forge a path for civilization. In the mountain town of Gumbolt, a typical frontier environment that is, except for the dancer Terpsichore, exclusively masculine, Keith becomes a hero by his display of physical power, facing a stage-coach robber in singlehanded combat, rescuing miners from death in a flooded shaft. In New York Keith acquires an equally heroic status by his display of moral righteousness and incorruptible honesty. Like Franklin during his first days in Philadelphia, Keith wanders through the streets of New York, fascinated by the opportunities for self-creation the city seems to hold out to him. Once Keith has realized some of these opportunities, he becomes a powerful healer of social ills and an orderer of the moral confusion that afflicts urban society. Page has personified the corrupting force in Ferdy Wickersham, the coldhearted, greedy capitalist, who is indirectly responsible for Norman Wentworth's financial ruin and directly for ruin of his domestic happiness. Keith steps in to save both, his friend's bank and his marriage. In Southern fiction, a body of literature that is not rich in self-made men or solitary frontier heroes, Gordon Keith represents something of an oddity.

The two heroic figures, one following a path that leads into the heart of civilization and the other searching for as yet unsettled open spaces, represent two

models of masculinity and two sets of opposing, even contradictory, values; each nevertheless has its place of importance in the Anglo-European version of the American dream. By becoming identifiable with one or the other type of hero, Keith underscores his "Americanness"; but by embracing both at the same time, and moreover by becoming fully absorbed into neither, Keith manages to become an American without sacrifice of his inherited identity as a Southern gentleman. As Keith moves between Gumbolt and New York, he never leaves but merely expands the circumference of the horizon that has defined his character from the beginning. Both worlds and both sets of values are contained within the mythical plantation landscape, the civilized space surrounded by virgin wilderness.

Page's interest in stressing that Keith, though able to function with equal self-assurance in both worlds, belongs wholly to neither is evident throughout the novel. In the roughhewn, riotous masculine society of Gumbolt, Keith is able to subdue any local ruffian in a fistfight, but he acquires notoriety for his commitment to work. Keith also sets himself apart by his immunity to the charms of Terpsichore, who is worshipped and feared by all other men in the town. As Keith begins his successful career in New York, he is also at first clearly an outsider in the city. The closer Keith comes to achieving his goal of becoming accepted by the city's financial and social elite, the more Page pushes into the foreground the other half of Keith's character, that which dissociates him from men like Wickersham. One could argue that the main business of the novel is accomplished when Keith has realized his initial objectives. What follows adds nothing to the story of Keith's success. In fact, the final chapters of Gordon Keith might be dismissed upon the same charges that can be brought against the so called "evasion sequence" at the end of Huckleberry Finn, when Tom Sawyer suddenly reappears and initiates Jim's complicated liberation after Huck has already reached his

"objective" - the recognition of Jim's humanity. The endings to both novels seem contrived, unnecessary, and anticlimactic. Had Page concluded his story with his hero's triumph on Wall Street, Gordon Keith would be an unequivocal endorsement of Grady's New South message: the South has "fallen in love with work" and is prepared to accomodate itself to the Yankee standard. Instead, the plot is extended in a way to suggest a retraction of that message. Having made the money he desired and having at last gained the recognition even of Mrs. Yorke, Keith is increasingly plagued by self-doubt and shuttles between New York and the country as he tries to discover the answers to two burning questions: Is he still in love with Alice? And, is Lois in love with him? Page remedies the complete stagnation that threatens the plot at that point by reviving Keith's Gumbolt role, that of the individualistic, self-reliant frontier hero. Confrontations between Keith and his old enemy Ferdy Wickersham replace the quest for wealth and recognition as the principal source of dramatic action in the book's last portion. In one instance, Keith finds Wickersham together with Lois Huntington in Central Park, just as the villain, frustrated by the girl's persistent rejection of his advances, has assaulted her. Keith interferes swiftly and knocks Wickersham down with a single blow.

A major part of these final chapters is devoted to Keith's search for Squire Rawson's granddaughter Phrony Tripper, whom Wickersham had persuaded to leave the Ridge, only to seduce and then abandon her in New York. Phrony's story of country innocence foolishly allured and then ruined by the sophistication of an urbane seducer forms a sentimental subplot in Page's novel that has been familiar to readers of American literature at least since Susanna Rowson's Charlotte Temple (1794) and Hannah Foster's The Coquette (1797). In this story Keith is cast as the avowed protector of innocence, a role germane to his inherited code of gentlemanliness; he

promises the distraught Rawson to find and return his lost child. But interestingly, Page chooses to have Keith fail in this endeavor. By the time Phrony is finally discovered alone in one of the city's rundown tenements, she is beyond help, half-starved and nearly insane. Keith determines to avenge her death, teaming up with Dave Dennison, his former pupil at Ridge College and Phrony's true lover, with whose help he blackmails Wickersham into fleeing New York for South America. Wickersham's exile, however, proves to be only temporary; he reappears, finds Lois Huntington on her aunt's estate in the country, nearly kills her and is finally killed himself by Rawson, while Keith is on a yacht far away, still making love, albeit quite perfunctorily, to Alice Lancaster.

Page artificially extends the plot by attaching to its climax an almost incoherent sequence of events that tests the endurance of even the most indulgent of readers. Gordon Keith, the new- order Southern gentleman, declines to near impotence when he seeks most to act in accordance with his gentlemanly inheritance. Page would have his readers believe that Keith's ability to strive for success, wealth, and status without becoming tainted in the process, without losing his gentlemanly indifference to gain and his capacity for selfless heroism, is causally related to his heritage as a Southern gentleman. The code of gentlemanliness, "his only patrimony" according to Page's argument, is all he needs to realize the boundless opportunities the American dream affords, without succumbing to his victory's temptations. Keith remains morally superior to his environment. Armed with his inherited sense of self-worth, he can resist even as corrupt and corrupting a society as New York's. But Keith finds that New York society has the power to obfuscate his best motives. When Keith acts most in accordance with his inherited values, he thereby gives himself the appearance of having acted most dishonorably. He defends Terpsichore against Wickersham's insults and is

branded as immoral. He is seen visiting the Wentworth mansion and the rumor spreads that he has become Wickersham's successor in the affections of Norman's wife. Page's version of the city persistently creates ambiguities and reverses intentions. Keith learns that his inherited code of gentlemanliness has meaning in the city only as long as he sacrifices his desire for success to its demands. When those sacrifices are no longer necessary, when he has gained the recognition he craved, society sees him as one of its own no matter what his motives are.

Keith makes one final attempt to possess both, the "ideal" he envisioned when he began to make his way in the world with nothing but his gentlemanly self to his name and the hand of Alice who embodied that ideal for him. But Alice herself finally releases him, with a reminder that she, to whatever degree she once might have been the "ideal" Keith saw in her, is too much a product of her environment not to disappoint him now. Besides, she warns Keith that if he remains in her world, he too must become "a society man - like - some of those I sit next to and dance with and drive with and - enjoy and despise" (GK 534).

Keith is allowed to escape his fate without repudiating the desire that precipitated his ambition. Lois Huntington waits for him in the country in exactly the same spot and in the same alluring posture of wounded feminity in which he had found Alice years before. Despite its romantic ending, Gordon Keith is somehow far less optimistic that Red Rock had been. There is no doubt at all in Red Rock about where the "place" of the gentleman is, nor is there any uncertainty about the conviction that the future of the South lies in the extension of its past. Southern planters in general had initially been convinced that the South could survive at all only if it retained as much as possible its working order before abolition. The former slaves, planters argued, would not work at all without some form of external coercion. Anything but a system closely resembling

that of the old plantation would mean an extension and intensification of the chaos caused by radical reconstructionists like Leech. By the time he wrote Gordon Keith, Thomas Nelson Page had accepted the improbability of such a design. Page had embraced the New South rhetoric of Grady and others and was himself involved in schemes for exploiting the virgin wealth of South in accordance with the Yankee standard. Page himself lived in the city and knew very well where the future of the Southern gentleman lay. He had married the wealthy widow, even though his hero, Gordon Keith, chooses not to.

In Red Rock heredity triumphs over environment. Washy Still, though he may from the distance look like a gentleman, proves upon closer inspection to be nothing but the son of an overseer. Ownership of the mansion and the land will not turn him into a gentleman, and Steve Allen remains the gentleman he was born to be even when he is forced to wield a hoe in the fields. Yet even then, the implications of that image invite ambiguities Page undoubtably wanted to avoid. Allen, "moved by the grassy appearance of the once beautifully cultivated fields," tries his hand at agricultural labor once most of Red Rock's former slaves have disappeared, but his "bucolic operations" only call attention to the plantation paradise's dependence on the work force that maintained its splendor (RR 94). Allen's "work" resembles play. He is a gentleman, and thus he works not for the commodity value of what his work produces but for the benefit of communing with nature. His plowing is leisure activity, not work in the modern sense. But precisely because the scene carries such strong pastoral overtones, the master now becomes quite indistinct from his servant. The confusion is dissolved for Steve Allen because in Red Rock Page treats Reconstruction as an extension of the Civil War. In Red Rock, Reconstruction is even more clearly a war than the war itself, which Page covers quickly, because its aftermath is unequivocally, to use Paul Fussell's

term, "binary" in its polarization of opposing forces. "If truth is the main casualty in war," to quote Fussell again, "ambiguity is another" (79). Leech and Still are the enemies; and in waging war against them, in fighting against them for possession of a concrete territory, Allen's heroic, gentlemanly self becomes unambiguous. The question Red Rock invites but leaves unanswered is, what follows the victory?

Gordon Keith answers that question and suggests new and weightier ones for the potential the Southern gentleman as a post-war literary symbol. Gordon Keith's reality is no longer straightforwardly "binary." It has become essentially ironic. The acquisitive Yankee, the villain in Red Rock, is still separable from the ideal Keith embodies, but he is no longer an enemy who must be conquered. Keith and the Yankee operate, as they must in a New South, on the same territory, and Keith has, as a matter of fact, absorbed much of the other's character into himself. Keith's work is that of any Yankee businessman; the crucial difference, as Page reminds his readers again and again, lies in Keith's sense of honor, which manifests itself, with increasing difficulty as the novel progresses, in often incredulous acts of "war," in other words, in revivals of "binary" situations, such as Keith's confrontations with Ferdy Wickersham. We come to realize that the presence of Leech is rather a blessing for Allen, while Keith, lacking a specific "enemy" to oppose and conquer, is finding it difficult to act honorably and that as a consequence New Yorkers quite rightly find it difficult not to accept Keith as one of their own. The threat to Allen's status as gentleman is external and can be resisted, to paraphrase Walker Percy, with "honorable violence." In Keith this violence has "turned inward." If Keith does not, as the fathers of Percy's Will Barrett during the same phase of history do, become "ironic" himself, he does at least come to face the ironic consequences of leaving the plantation garden behind; as the result of his success, Keith should have to confront the denial of the ideals that made his triumph

possible (The Last Gentleman 16). But Page evades, suggesting unconvincingly and thereby perhaps betraying his own resignation into the fact that gentlemanliness has lost its former significance, that it is Lois and not Alice who embodied "the ideal" all along.

Steve Allen is left with the illusion that something like the Arcadian walled-in space of the plantation garden is recoverable through heroic conquest and can exist in a future without slave labor, but Gordon Keith looks ahead to a Quentin Compson, for whom that space itself is no longer available or even, as Absalom,Absalom! shows, imaginable and who is left with only the obsession for stasis, stopping "universal progress," and recovering a long lost innocence. Keith's retreat from New York and Alice Yorke-Lancaster (the perfect symbol of intersectional reconciliation) is irrational, but it is not yet, as Quentin's will be, a retreat into irrationality. Attempting to carry gentlemanliness, the freedom from the need to alienate a part of himself into the fruit of his labor, beyond his plantation-bound horizon, Keith finds that work is inevitably alienating outside the garden and that without slavery such alienation is difficult to avoid even for a gentleman.

Page's failure to create a convincing symbol for a new Arcady, a persuasive image of a New South without the worship of progress and materialism, is largely due to his refusal or inability to see the need for a fundamental social reform of Southern society. Page insists that if the South is to escape economic powerlessness and at the same time to avoid the social instability industrialization and commercialization will bring, it must look toward the paternalistic rule of gentlemen of the past.

Without the option to dissociate the traditional gentlemanly ideal from the pastoral space, however vaguely conceived, Gordon Keith's recovered garden innocence lies at best in a place like New Leeds, still remote from New York, but unmistakeably bound there, and at worst in "the yet vaguer land of Memory" (RR vii). For a later "last

gentleman," in whose memory also exists a protective space of innocence and harmony, Jack Burden in Warren's All the King's Men, the conditions of gentlemanly survival have changed radically. Like Gordon Keith, Jack Burden is an innocent in an alien, corrupt world where power and affection are tradeable commodities. Like Keith, Burden recoils from the possibility of becoming absorbed into that world. Keith rejects the temptations of pure power by retreating from the city into the innocent country and into the arms of the as yet "unravished bride of quietness." Warren's Burden, however, knows better. He finds corruption at the very heart of that innocent garden. Like Keith, Burden is finally saved by the woman he has loved all along, but the difference is that Burden's Anne Stanton becomes his and he becomes himself only after she, too, has been implicated in his guilt.

Another echo of Gordon Keith can be found in what is arguably the last of the "last gentlemen." Keith beats the Yankee at his own game without thereby becoming himself one with the former enemy. He achieves success in the eyes of the Yankee world, but, thanks to the intervention of his heritage, in the person of his father, he learns not to measure success in terms of wealth alone. Instead, Keith reaffirms the values of family, heritage, and love. Walker Percy's Will Barrett (in The Second Coming, 1980) has also succeeded in the business world without finding in his achievement the satisfaction, wholeness, and identity he craves. Barrett is still a gentlemann of leisure in the sense that he too remains indifferent to wealth and his pursuit of it. But while that detachment measures Keith's real success and final triumph, for Barrett it merely measures the degree of his alienation from an actuality in which the South has surpassed even Grady's vision. Keith recalls his father whenever he is in danger of straying from the path of gentlemanliness. So does Will Barrett; but for him the image of the father, the man of unbending honor, is a burdensome, haunting

ghost, that is not to be exorcised. In Page's escapist romance, Gordon Keith, rather than facing the consequences of his ambition, finds Lois Huntington, like himself immune to the temptations of the world, and withdraws with her into the seclusion of his father's world, where pastoral poetry bears a resemblance to reality. Will Barrett at last also finds a soulmate, like himself slightly out of focus with the modern world, and retreats with her into a greenhouse, or what is left of the European colonial dream of a tropical Paradise where the curse does not hold. If Page's irrationality stands in juxtaposition to his age's reality and its demands for solutions to actual social problems, for Percy's heroic gentleman irrationality somehow looks like a sane alternative to reality.

FOUR: John March, Southerner -

The Transcendence of Gentlemanliness

Gordon Keith is a direct literary descendant of William Wirt's Patrick Henry, the complete gentleman, possessing both a high degree of cultivation and natural simplicity. Wirt's biography endows Henry with the ability to adapt himself to courtly European society while remaining unaffected by its shallow morality, its ostentation, and its hypocritical politeness. Henry is a man of nature as well as a gentleman of the world. Keith exemplifies the same idealized characteristics. He proves himself capable of functioning successfully among the dominant values of civilized society, but he does not become trapped by the degenerative influence of New York's urban sophistication. The ideal both Wirt and Page sought to identify lies in the fusion of two contradictory value systems, and Keith is designed to revive that ideal in the minds of Southern and Northern readers alike. Most importantly, Keith is complete in a way that other admirable old order gentlemen like Dr. Cary in Red Rock for instance are not. Cary possesses in full measure the qualities of Simms' gentlemanly Captain Porgy: high birth, cultivation, and indifference to material gain. But he lacks the virtues of Sergeant Millhouse, his industry, his practical sense, and his ability to define himself through the performance of socially purposeful work. Both sets of values together form the ideal of gentlemanliness; and both are present in Page's characterization of Gordon Keith. I have tried to suggest that a similar logic lies behind the at least partial redemption of

Hiram Still in Page's Red Rock. Jacquelin Gray will need Still's talent for moneymaking if he is to survive in the capitalist marketplace. But he will have to resist the greed that drives Still if he is to remain a gentleman. In that sense, Gordon Keith is Page's sequel to Red Rock. Keith has the bifurcated character Gray must develop in the future after he has recovered his patrimony if Red Rock plantation is to have a future at all. Keith is both a new kind of Southern gentleman, one who embraces the notion that work is man's primary access to personal fulfillment and social relevance, and an extension of the mythical Old South. Like the antebellum plantation society he is "in but not of the bourgeois world" (Fox-Genovese 55).

The Southern concept of gentlemanliness has never explicitly denied the importance of successful competition in the capitalist market place, but it has insisted that a gentleman's self-definition is not primarily dependent on his performance in that contest. Instead, the gentleman was identified first of all by his paternalistic role in a household composed of dependent slaves and white women and children. Thus Gordon Keith can and does embrace his work wholeheartedly, can strive for and even relish success as long as he remains convinced of motives other than the purely materialistic ends of his industry and toil. These motives include not only his chivalric/romantic quest for Alice's love. They extend to his responsibility for the return of Elphinstone to its rightful owner and, later on, to his sense of obligation to honor and fulfill the trust placed in him by the community of workers and friends at Gumbolt/New Leeds. Page is clearly seeking a substitute for the "household" that traditionally supplied the slaveholding planter gentleman with meaning in an extension of something like family feeling and kinship bonds. But the truth of the matter is that the abolition of slavery had removed the institution that alone prevented bourgeois culture form penetrating Southern

civilization completely. Without slaves, Elphinstone can exist as an agricultural enterprise only by becoming a part of the capitalist market.

As long as Keith knows himself to be an outsider in New York and as long as he is so perceived and treated by New York society, his sense of selfhood remains secure. Only when New Yorkers recognize him as one of their own kind does he begin to doubt himself and then it becomes necessary for Page to underline Keith's separateness as a gentleman. Seen in this light, the romance's conclusion acquires a new significance. Ostensibly, the choice Keith confronts toward the end of the novel is between two women he loves, but the implications of this choice go much further. What is implied in Keith's decision between Alice and Lois is also not simply a question of where ultimately his allegiance lies, with urban America and the future or rural America and the past. What is at stake for Keith is the choice between being merely "in" the world of universal progress and being "of" it.

In a society that equates masculine identity more and more with work, the Southern gentleman, already deprived of many of the traditional sources of his identity, turns more and more to domestic paternalism for self-confirmation and, as Anne Godwin Jones writes, "fastens even more firmly to the dual image of woman as the lodestar of perfect southern virtue . . . and as the fragile submissive lady" (Jones 19). Both women, Alice Yorke and Lois Huntington, embody perfection of beauty and virtue, but Alice is wealthy and strong, while Lois has neither her own fortune nor Alice's status in society. Page has been arguing that urban scoiety is corrupt because it attaches market values to all relationships; Alice Yorke knows this, but because she understands, she is able to manipulate the game and assert her independence. The marriage with Alice is impossible not only because it would be interpreted as an enhancement of Keith's business prospects, but more importantly because Alice Yorke

is not dependent on Keith financially or otherwise. Lois, on the other hand, is weak and wounded, victimized by Ferdy Wickersham.

Page's attempt to fuse the contradictory ideals gathered under the concept of gentlemanliness into a convincing whole is no more realistic than Wirt's portrait of the complete gentleman in his biography of Patrick Henry had been. Page simply restated the old conflict between the natural man and the man of culture in a new historical context, offering little more than a reaffirmation of the gentleman's dependence on an assertion of dominance and authority over others - in the absence of slaves, frail womanhood alone is required for Keith to find himself. Keith identifies his most private ambitions with the work he performs, but then rejects the social identity his work has produced. Through work Keith seeks primarily self-confirmation and social recognition, but when he discovers the power of work to change not only his social status but his very sense of self, he recoils and falls back upon his inherited values.

Gordon Keith ends in a facile evasion rather than a resolution of the conflicts it suggests. But the book was not meant to examine critically to what extent traditional notions of gentlemanliness could provide meaningful solutions to the problems American society faced at the turn of the century. It was meant to inspire young men to follow an ideal, just as Wirt had meant to do with his Patrick Henry. Gordon Keith may be seen as a terminal point for one phase in the continuing role the gentleman plays in Southern literature. The society whose strengths Keith reflects, while he also obscures our perception of its crucial weaknesses, has passed, and the Southern gentleman, having inherited his slaveholding fathers' code of conduct but forced to orient himself among radically altered circumstances, begins after Page to serve a new function in Southern writing. This new phase began with the work of George Washington Cable, for whom the gentleman no longer served as the repository of all that was grand and

admirable about the old order but became a sufferer in the "fire of exaction," which mere economic power could not quench. Cable's John March, Southerner is a novel of Reconstruction and Redemption, covering the same time period as Red Rock and Gordon Keith, and its plotting and characterization have much, for some readers far too much, in common with Page's sentimental romances. But the similarities end when it comes to the way in which both writers portray the struggles of the post-Civil War Southern gentlemen. In Red Rock, the gentleman's adversary comes from without; but John March's principal enemy is not a carpetbagger or a Northern capitalist seeking to colonialize the South; his antagonist is John March, Southerner and gentleman, himself. Gordon Keith relies on his inherited plantation horizon for success in the post war world; John March functions at all only after he has learned to forget most of his inherited gentlemanliness.

George Washington Cable was one of the first Southern writers who used elements of the literary plantation tradition and popular local-color fiction to examine the South's numerous social problems critically. The Grandissimes (1880), the novel upon which Cable's reputation as a novelist rests today, is set in and near the French Quarter of New Orleans in 1803, but its indictment of racial injustice and its criticism of a business ethic that hindered the implementation of social reforms could be, and was intended to be applied to Louisiana of the 1870's. Cable agreed with Grady and Page that economic development was necessary and important, but he felt strongly that the New South creed's emphasis on industrialization and a new work ethic distracted attention from more important social changes.

Although Cable's second novel, Dr. Sevier (1883), is also set in New Orleans and in the past (ca. 1860), its criticism of the Old South myth, and especially the Cavalier image propagated by popular romancers like Page, and of an emerging New

South that in many ways exacerbated the old evils is more pointed and less mellowed by the presence of soft spoken, charming Creoles. In fact the story of John Richling, next to Dr. Sevier the most important character in the book, offers itself to a direct comparison with Page's Gordon Keith. Richling, the disinherited son of a Kentucky planter, has come to the city to find work. The plot centers on Richling's struggles to reconcile his gentlemanly plantation upbringing with the demands of the urban business world and the need to make a living for himself and his family. Like Keith, Richling is an alien in the city, thoroughly "uncommercial" and unable to adapt to the "unchivalric" life of the capitalist, "subordinated only and entirely to the getting of wealth and . . . the sinister old maxim that Time is Money'" (7). Like Keith, John Richling eventually learns to adapt himself to the ways of the marketplace and is changed in the process. Richling finds employment as an accountant for a German immigrant baker, but too much work, too much desire to excel, ruins his health and finally leads to his death. In a world where "time is money" there is no place for a gentleman. Richling tells Dr. Sevier: "[My] maxim a year ago . . . was to do what I liked. Now it's to like what I do" (250). What kills John Richling is his inability to close the gap between what modern society sees as play - doing what he wants - and what it recognizes as work - doing what he must in order to make a living. Leisure, in the sense of gentlemanly activity that combines both work and play into one condition of being, has no meaning in the commercial world, and a gentleman must either withdraw or accept work as a means of reinventing himself.

The story of John Richling is, to some extent, also the story of George Washington Cable. Cable's fiction, before the late 1890's, betrays a dual-consciousness, divided between the desire to portray Southerners, Southern institutions, and Southern life without the veil of time-honored myths and the need to accomodate

demands placed upon him by arbiters of literary taste like Richard Watson Gilder of the Century company. According to the currently accepted critical view, Cable's novels from the period before 1895 lay the foundation for a new kind of Southern literature, free from dogmatism and racial anxiety, but they fall short of realizing the potential they embody. Dr.Sevier, like The Grandissimes before it, originated as an attempt to encode social criticism in fiction but ended, Fred Hobson complains, as "defused romance" (112). After 1895, Cable gave up attempting to write socially conscious fiction altogether and produced instead unmitigated romance, populated by cavaliers and belles and filled with high adventure and chivalric love. But before he resigned himself to the fate of John Richling, doing what he must rather than what he likes, Cable tried once more to have it both ways - to reach a large audience through a novel and to expose the "real" South behind the complacent dreamscape readers had consumed for decades.

John March, Southerner, published in 1895 but in preparation for almost a decade before, was to be Cable's comprehensive portrait of the South during the years since 1865. This portrait is decidedly unpleasant, a quality which has led many readers to consider Cable as one of the creators of the "tortured South," which replaced the plantation myth as the dominant literary image of the South during the twentieth century. Cable exposed all the manifestations of Old South evils he perceived and added to them the peculiar evils engendered by the New South's drive to join the industrial age. The novel attacks shallow idealism, stubborn caste thinking, narrowminded "rednecks," corrupt politicians, rabid evangelism, racism, gyneolatry, wasteful and mindless exploitation of natural resources in the name of progress, and the shocking degree of violence that characterized Southern life. Cable this time did not filter his assessment of the modern South through a historical perspective. The action begins within weeks after Appomattox and ends with the redemption of power from Radical rule twenty years

later. The setting is not New Orleans, because Cable wanted to represent the whole South and the city is in many ways atypical of the region. Instead Cable based his fictional state of Dixie on observations he made on an excursion to the countryside near Marrietta in northwestern Georgia (Turner 291).

Suez, the capital of Dixie, is the commercial and administrative center of a three neighbouring counties. One of these, Blackland, was dominated by large cotton-plantations before the war and is now the site of new freedmen's settlements like Leggettstown; another, Sandstone, is an inaccessible hill country, still only sparsely populated by clannish and violent mountaineer families; Clearwater, the third county, includes the vast Widewood estate owned by Judge March. Widewood's 100,000 acres have remained an almost untouched wilderness because Powhatan March and his fathers before him believed in free labor and were convinced that "slave an' free labor couldn't thrive side by side." So they had simply held on to their lands generation after generation, waiting for the time when their dream to fill them "with a great population, p'osp'ous an' happy" (JMS 63). That time has come after the end of the Civil War. Unfortunately for the Judge, the property has been heavily mortgaged over the years, and the family now lacks even the funds to provide John, who is eight years old, with an education. Still Judge March refuses steadfastly to sell an acre of Widewood to speculators, lumber companies, or mining concerns.

But Judge March is not the only one with a plan for the development of his lands. As the novel opens, he and John meet the Reverend John Wesley Garnet and his adjutant Jeff-Jack Ravenel, two veterans on their way home from Appomattox. Garnet and Ravenel persuade the Judge to send John to Rosemont, Garnet's private school near Suez, on a note secured by a title to much of John's future inheritance. Gallant war

heroes as well as shrewd businessmen, the two plan to have a hand in Widewood's potential economic value.

Thus John March spends his adolescence under the tutelage of Garnet, a gentleman who is, like many other Old Order gentlemen one encounters in the pages of Southern romances, somewhat "addicted to rhetoric" and thus has acquired a habit of always "just missing the vital truth of things" (JMS 27). While John attends Rosemont, the state of Dixie is fighting an internal war. Gentlemen are divided into two camps. One side, lead by a Confederate veteran, General Launcelot Halliday, adjusts quickly to post-abolition reality. Halliday converts his old cotton plantations in Blackland into "villages of small freeholding farmers," opposes the vicious crop-lien system of farming, and supports the acts of Reconstruction enforced by the national government (JMS 53). In the eys of his opponents, he is therefore a contemptible traitor and a scalawag. The other side, with Garnet as its champion, keeps aloft the banner of "the 'masterly inactivity' of Dixie's whitest and best" (JMS 55). The streets of Suez and the countryside from Blackland to Sandstone reflect the turmoil that has engulfed the state. Black men elbow their former masters at the polls, their wives call each other "ladies" and refer to their former mistresses as "women"; white gentlemen don hoods and masks and ride on night raides through the freedmen's village of Leggettstown. The picture of the immediate post-war years resembles that drawn in Red Rock, but Cable draws the battlelines with none of the distinctness readers of Page could expect. "All the corruptions . . . pouring down and spouting up upon Dixie their rain and ashes," Cable's narrator insists, "[were] bred by both sides" (JMS 55).

Because he had so outspokenly championed the cause of racial reform in his essays, lectures, and some of his fiction, Cable had in the past been accused of idealizing the black man; he makes sure that the same could not be said about John

March,Southerner. Cornelius Leggett, the leader of the tri-county area freedmen, more often than not does represent Cable's political point of view, but Leggett is as corrupt and lascivious as Garnet, the greatest villain in the novel. The difference beteen them is, in Leggett's own words, that "niggers steals with they claws, white men with they laws. The claws steals by the pound; the laws steals by the boatload" (JMS 95). Cable's picture of the historical period is, in short, far more complex than Page's. The actors on the stage or not personifications of certain vices or virtues but usually possess some of both.

Powhatan March dies while witnessing his son's graduation from Rosemont. His death makes John the heir to Widewood's economic potential and places upon him the equivocal honor of being recognized as "the Hope of Suez." Garnet boasts, "There's enough mineral wealth in Widewood alone to make Suez a Pittsburg, and water-power enough to make her a Minneapolis" (JMS 139). By this time the state has entered a period of stability and even prosperity. Garnet and his white supremacist, boomerist party have regained control of political power and Leggett cooperates with them, serving his own financial interests as much as possible even while remaining a genuine and effective advocate for his people. A railroad is built to connect Suez with the lines to the North, and Northern investors are beginning to consider investing in the region. Above all of the excitement over the progress made in Dixie, however, there hangs like a shadow the still unfulfilled potential of John's lands.

John March, for his own part, clings unfailingly to his fathers' dreams. His schemes to attract settlers to Widewood fail one after the other, and at last he is forced to give up all hopes of developing Widewood privately and agrees to incorporate the project by forming a land development company with Garnet, Ravenel, and several other Suez gentlemen as principal shareholders. March's failure to recognize the purely

selfish ambition behind Garnet's rhetoric and his complete lack of business sense soon enable the less idealistic members of the company to wrench what little control March had away from him completely. While he travels through New England, in search of investors, Garnet and his supporters manipulate the legislature to channel public funds into their private enterprises and ultimately defraud March of all but a small parcel of the entire Widewood estate. March finally learns the truth about Garnet when he returns from his excursion, but by then it is too late. Garnet controls almost all of Widewood.

The tri-county area has indeed experienced an unprecedented economic boom. But as quickly as prosperity has come, it vanishes again. By the time March has at last learned to see the present and the future unobscured by a mist of unfulfilled ideals and weighty promises, Dixie's economy has all but collapsed. Widewood has not become the home of "happy and prosperous" families; instead, it has been settled by scores of European peasants, brought there on promises of freedom from drudgery and poverty but left unemployed after the new mines and lumbermills have closed.

John's disillusionment with his fathers' aspirations and with Garnet, in whose gentlemanly honor he had long blindly placed his trust, completes his coming-of-age. On the one hand, he has had to learn to reexamine his own and his forefathers' idealistic hopes in the light of practical realities. In the process, he has had to discard a great many inherited values before he is finally prepared to accept what Cornelius Leggett told him long ago: "Ef you wants to make a rich country, you ain't got to make it a white man's country naw a black man's country, . . . no, seh! But the whole effulgence is jess this: you got to make it a po' man's country!" (JMS 121-2) On the other hand, John has had to keep himself from falling into the opposite extreme of embracing Garnet's absolute and socially irresponsible worship of economic progress and personal gain. By the end of the novel, in other words, John March has arrived on a middle

ground between his father's impractical idealism and his mentor's ruthless materialism. This "neutral territory" bears at least a superficial resemblance to the one which Page tries to establish for his gentlemanly entrepreneur, Gordon Keith. The differences between Page's and Cable's treatments of the gentleman figure in particular and the South's pressing social problems in general are not to be overlooked, but despite its realistic portrayal of many aspects of Southern life that Page glibly passed over, John March, Southerner is not a realistic novel. John March's unreasoned optimism is eventually tempered into a more realistic perspective, but the conclusion Cable devised for the novel itself can not be called anything but optimistic. March recovers his patrimony with the help of Garnet's daughter, Barbara, and settles in Suez, where he becomes an influential citizen, a champion of racial justice and an advocate of rational progress. This we are told by the narrator who confesses to not having seen March or Dixie in years and who has himself heard the rest of the story from a Suez gentleman visiting New York. Cable's novel is, like Page's Gordon Keith, perhaps several chapters longer than it should have been.

The "resolution" by which Cable manages to restore Widewood to March is particularly reminiscent of Pageian plotting, as are long stretches of the narrative given over to a complicated and often vapid love story. After John has come into his inheritance, he gives no indication of possessing either the energy or the self-discipline to bring his father's settlement scheme closer to becoming reality. He waits, uncertain about what to do, and feels uncomfortable under the weight of expectations others have placed upon him, until Fannie, the daughter of General Halliday, urges him to plan for himself and take action. March is in love with Fannie but she loves Jeff-Jack Ravenel, Garnet's most important ally and the politically powerful editor of the Suez Courant. His pride injured because Fannie offers him only friendship in return for his passion,

March throws himself into his work, determined to prove that he is a better man than Ravenel.

On his way to New England, hoping to interest investors in Widewood, March meets Barbara Garnet. In the iron cold of the North, the two Southerners find a strong bond in their common homesickness for their warm homeland and fall in love, though Barbara is still also attracted to the Bostonian Henry Fair. March himself remains uncertain of his feelings. He has vowed to remain loyal to his widowed mother and to include no other woman in his plans. Again, it is work that becomes his substitute for passion. Because of his inexperience in business affairs and his nearly incredible innocence of human corruption, he is an easy prey for the unscrupulous Garnet. Seeing the land he had dreamed of filling with happy and prosperous homesteads instead overrun by speculators and miners, March decides to make a stand against corruption and greed and to recover his patrimony. But he must now also banish any thought of Barbara from his mind. To fight for control over Widewood, half of which now belongs to Garnet, and to pursue Garnet's daughter at the same time would be dishonorable.

The strain of his battle ruins John's health, and as he lies languishing in a Suez hotel room, he fantasizes feverishly that Johanna, Barbara's maid, sent to nurse him back to health, is her mistress, whose picture he keeps under his pillow. Finally, when March is nearest to death, "naturally and easily, without a jar between true cause and effect, the romantic happen[s]" (JMS 501). Barbara recalls a piece of paper she had taken from her father's satchel and kept for twenty years. This document reveals that Garnet has knowingly profited from a mix-up in landtitles long ago. It proves that March is the rightful owner of the land upon which Garnet's Rosemont stands, while Garnet himself owns a worthless plot in Widewood, the only part of John's inheritance

Garnet had not managed to steal. Barbara's discovery, along with others that come to light at the same opportune moment and force her father to leave Dixie, impoverishes her and restores to John much of the land he had lost, thus removing all obstacles from the path of their love. When at last even John's mother gives her blessing, the two lovers fall into each other's arms.

The most reasonable explanation for the presence of such conventional banality in a novel that is paradoxically also unconventional in its treatment of Southern life outside the scope of the romantic love interest can be found in Cable's relationship with his editor, Richard Watson Gilder, one of the most powerful arbiters of literary taste at that time. Gilder first read the manuscript in 1890 and rejected it for serialization in the Century. He complained to Cable that his book was anything but "literature." Gilder's disappointment was probably grounded on expectations generated by Cable's earlier and considerably more soft-spoken fictions set in picturesque Louisiana. As editor it was his responsibility to "dilute[] the contents of his periodical to a safe consistency," and presumably Gilder feared that the readers of the Century would find Confederate gentlemen like Garnet who defrauded widows and carried on affairs with married women and black men like Leggett who preached of social equality between races offensive (Ziff 123-4). Cable reluctantly revised the draft, but the Century did not buy John March, Southerner. It was published by Scribner's. We have no way of knowing exactly what Cable changed as he revised his manuscript between 1890 and 1895, but since we must believe that Gilder wanted to have less realism and more moonlight and magnolias, we can assume that Cable tried to sugarcoat the bitter pill by giving added emphasis to the love story (Rubin 119).

The romance plot, which preoccupies about one half of the entire novel, involves often admittedly tiresome conversations about matters such as the nature of second love,

and it does indeed appear to be unrelated to Cable's agenda of social and political concerns. Whether or not it constitutes the "literature" Gilder found lacking in the draft is another question. It seems clear at least that Gilder sought "literature" in an area different from the one where more recent readers, like Louis D. Rubin, Wayne Mixon, and Fred Hobson, look for it. All three express approval the novel's incipient realism - precisely what had apparently annoyed Gilder - and tend to find the romance irritating, dismissing it as largely irrelevant to Cable's primary purpose, which is to expose moral blindness, racial and social injustice and political corruption. One may agree that several paragraphs of John March, romantic swain, hovering over a bobolink in New England shrubbery tend to undermine the high seriousness of the novel's central subject matter, but only if one can be certain about what that subject matter is. The critical practice of singling out elements of pre-Faulknerian truthtelling in John March, Southerner for admiration, while casting aside as deceptive the romantic remainder of the plot has at least one lamentable consequence. It suggests that the novel is a seriously disjointed work. In truth, it is far less fractured.

Though Louis D. Rubin's efforts to redeem the reputation of Cable's last major novel are indeed to be applauded - John March, Southerner deserves to be more widely read - his argument in "The Road to Yoknapatawpha" (1959) pushes the point of distancing Cable from the romantic sentimentalist tradition of John Esten Cooke and Augusta Evans Wilson and aligning him with the coming modernist renascence of the 1930's and 1940's too far (129). The romantic plot elements do not detract from but lend coherent support to the subject matter of the book.

The difference between Cable and a more traditional and more conventional romancer like Page can best be described without reference to the dichotomy between realism and romantic sentimentalism. Page's Red Rock and Gordon Keith are what

Mikhail Bakhtin would call *Prüfungsromane*, the fundamental organizing idea of which is the testing of the hero against a norm or an ideal. Steve Allen, Jacquelin Gray, and particularly Gordon Keith undergo a series of trials, probing their fidelity to the code of the Southern gentleman. John March, Southerner, on the other hand, is an *Entwicklungsroman*. March is not measured against the preexisting normative code of gentlemanly conduct, but the relationship is reversed: the norm, or code, is being tested against the hero's humanity. In Page, society's ability to function humanely is seen as dependent on the hero's success in his trial. In Cable, the hero's ability to function in society is seen as dependent on his ability to recognize the dehumanizing effects of the normative code (Bakhtin 388 ff). The *Entwicklung*, or development, of this awareness in John March is the crucial subject matter of the plot. And the forces that affect his growth from gentleman (an inherited selfhood shaped by the traditional code) to Southerner (an individual who is loyal to his region but not exclusively to one class or race) are determined by both halves of the plot, its romantic as much as its realistic material.

Fannie Halliday and Barbara Garnet, March's first and his second love, are no stereotypical plantation belles like Blair Cary or symbols of weak womanhood and rural simplicity like Lois Huntington. Fannie has no illusions about what she is getting into when she marries Jeff-Jack Ravenel, a man possessing many of the gentleman's virtues as well as many of his vices. "I knew, and know yet," Fannie tells Barbara, "that after the wedding I've got to do all the courting. I don't doubt he loves me, but Barb, love isn't his master. That's what keeps me scared" (JMS 245). Her anticipation proves to be correct, and Fannie's efforts to kindle in her husband the same kind of passion John March has always felt for her end in frustration for both even before their honeymoon is over. Ravenel meets her "courting" with apparent indifference. And Fannie fails to

understand that the "equal absence of fondness and resentment" in his behavior conceals his disappointment in her for "setting up domestic love and felicity as a purpose instead of an appliance" (JMS 380).

Barbara Garnet also faces a choice between a man who loves her, Henry Fair, and a man whom she loves, John March. Unlike Page's passive heroines, Barbara weighs her options deliberately in the full knowledge that "a man's life depends upon the man he is, not on the girl he gets," while a woman surrenders her power when she follows her passion (JMS 440). Barbara knows that a man who risks all for love is heroic and chivalrous; a woman is "wiser" to exercise control over her passion and to inspire love rather than give it without reservation (JMS 439). Torn between the dictates of her reason, which tell her that Henry Fair is the "safer" choice, and her heart, which tells her to wait for John March, she remembers her friend Fannie who chose the "imprudent" way and lost all. She also recalls her mother's own "tardy marriage" and suddenly understands its reason - "neither a controlling nor a controlled passion, but the reasoning despair of famishing affections" (JMS 440).

If Cable is indeed still indebted to Augusta Evans Wilson and other women writers in the sentimental tradition, that influence has produced a noteworthy result, for there is no precedent in the male plantation tradition for a heroine who is quite as self-conscious about the risks she takes by chosing to disregard what she has been taught is wise and safe for a woman.

Henry Fair does not regard romantic love as a necessary foundation for marriage. His private life and his work he keeps strictly separated and he is a slave to neither. "These people make every minute count," Barbara writes to Fannie, "and yet they're far from being always at work. I'm learning the art of recreation from them. Even the men have a knack for it that our Southern men know nothing about" (JMS 420). The

Southern men Barbara has in mind are those who, like her friend's husband, embrace their "causes" in business or in politics with undivided zeal and demand their wives' unquestioning support. Ravenel is disappointed in Fannie because of her failure to "co-operate with him in the things for which he thought it no great matter to risk his life" (JMS 381). Barbara knows that Henry Fair would not regard marriage as a "cooperation" in which all the choices are made by the man. Domestic love would be a "purpose" and not merely an "appliance." Yet this purpose would be circumscribed by a specifically defined sphere and kept apart from another, a public sphere, belonging wholly to her husband and remaining inaccessible to herself. John March lacks Fair's rational restraint every bit as much as Jeff-Jack Ravenel does. And like Ravenel's, March's attitudes are the product of a society that had accepted the notion of different roles for men and women but that believed the proper place for the female domestic sphere to be within, rather than separate from, the man's sphere of authority. Of course Barbara is herself a product of that society; she chooses March, risking the disappointment of her hopes (like Fannie) or loneliness (ending perhaps in a desperate marriage like her mother's), even though the tranquil and prosperous life Fair offers has tempted her. The Northern ideology of spheres does not represent an acceptable alternative to Southern domestic paternalism for Barbara. Her choice is to hold out for an ideal, a truly "cooperative" marriage, in which women are neither utterly disempowered nor confined within a restricted sphere.

Barbara Garnet is clearly more than the uninteresting heroine of a romantic subplot that undermines the "serious" and "worthwhile" subject matter with which the novel is concerned. Any reading that approaches John March, Southerner as a divided text unnecessarily trivializes the female characters in the book and also suggests a questionable transposition of an ideology of spheres into literature.

The novel is more profitably regarded as a whole text, not one in which romance clashes with realism, but one in which a familiar myth is carefully and deliberately dismantled. The love story and other stereotypical elements Cable "borrowed" from the romantic plantation tradition work for, not against, his general purpose: to tell the truth about his South. The region's strengths he identified with the potential in John March that becomes actual only after an agonizingly slow learning process. The region's weaknesses, the nostalgic longing for an irrecoverable past, shallow evangelical religion, prolonged disenfranchisement of women, blacks, and the poor, and a New South creed substituting economic for social reform, are all part of John March's upbringing and must be overcome. If John March seems in many ways cut in the mold of conventional romantic heroes, that is because he has imbibed the "savage ideal," as Wilbur J. Cash calls it in The Mind of the South: ". . . that ideal whereunder dissent and variety are completely suppressed and men become, in all their attitudes, professions, and actions, virtual replicas of one another" (93-4).

What he believed to be one of the root problems underlying the others, Cable had identified in a lecture eight years before he began to write John March, Southerner. In his commencement address at the University of Mississippi in 1882, Cable called for Southern writers to "be iconoclasts in [their] own homes." Before they could "participate in the nation's reading and writing," Southern writers had "some deeprooted and overgrown ideas to prune to truer proportions" ("Lit. in the Southern States" 44-45). First on Cable's list is the "plantation idea." The New South, he argues, despite its emphasis on progress and innovation, has still not eroded the tenacious presence of the plantation beneath the surface of change.

> The plantation idea is a semi-barbarism. It is the idea of the old South with merely the substitution of a Negro tenantry for Negro slaves. It is a pathetic

> and senile sentiment for the maintenance of a landed aristocracy in a country and in times that have outgrown that formidable error in political economy; . . . The landlord - the landlord, in all ages, has been a burden to the land wherever he has lorded it.
>
> (45)

The advice Cable gives to the young men of Mississippi applies equally to the hero of the novel he wrote a decade later: "Whoever is able to be a landlord is able to be something more valuable to himself and to the masses less fortunate than he" (45). As John March sits in his office in Suez, contemplating the difficulties of attracting workers and their families to his Widewood lands, he is exasperated by the rapid changes which had in a few years since the war "twisted and tangled the path to mastership" for him.

> Behold! All the way down the Swanee River, spite of what big levees of prevention and draining wheels of antiquated cure, how invincibly were the waters of a new order sweeping in upon the "old plantation."
> And still the old plantation slumbered on below the level of the world's great risen floods of emancipations and enfranchisements whereon party platforms, measures, triumphs, and defeats only floated and eddied, mere drift-logs of a current from which they might be cast up, but could not turn back.
>
> (JMS 235)

Of course, John March himself is at this stage in his *Entwicklung* still deeply attached to the "plantation idea." His plan for the development of a free-labor community on Widewood is admirable enough, but it still smacks of "landlordism." John personally assumes responsibility for guaranteeing the happiness and prosperity of that community, but he also reserves the right to determine the nature of that happiness. John must leave the "path to mastership" before he can become "more valuable to himself and to the masses less fortunate than he."

The hostility or indifference with which Cable's attack on the "plantation idea" had been met must have convinced him that for the truth to be told at all, it had to be told indirectly, or told "slant," as Emily Dickinson put it. John March, Southerner is an extraordinarily deceptive text. The reader accustomed to the romantic image of the South as a plantation dreamscape populated by stereotyped characters will find almost all of the elements of a conventional plantation novel, and yet each of these stable signifiers is, as I have tried to suggest in Cable's treatment of the belle, deliberately destabilized. The conventionality of John March, Southerner should be recontextualized with the novel's critical realism, not dismissed as trivial.

In the opening chapter, Judge March presents the eight-year-old John with a volume of Lord Chesterfield's Letters to his Son; but the book remains unread; John is too young at the time, and when his time comes other sources shape him into a "perfect gentleman." Aside from Garnet and John's adolescent worship of Fannie Halliday, it is his mother's influence that molds his character. Instead of Chesterfield's advice, which is insipid enough, John imbibes his mother's sentimental verses, lamenting the loss of the South's former grandeur and celebrating its gallant Cavalier heroes. "A heart really all but broken under its imaginary wrongs," Daphne Dalrymple March is doubtlessly Cable's most barbed and his funniest portrait of a Southern stereotype, the virtuous plantation matron, who, though often physically frail and weakened by the burden of her numerous responsibilities, nevertheless rules the men in her family with abolute power (JMS 84). Her literary ancestors are Mrs. Fawkner in George Tucker's The Valley of Shenandoah (1824) and Lucretia Meriwether in John Pendleton Kennedy's Swallow Barn (1832). Her type survived for decades in Southern fiction, reappearing in Faulkner's Mrs. Compson (The Sound and the Fury, 1929), Glasgow's Mrs. Timberlake (In This Our Life, 1941), and Styron's Mrs. Loftis (Lie Down In Darkness,

1951) - women who convert their own infirmity, imagined or real, into a source of power over their gentlemanly husbands and sons. John March's painful bungling as an irresolute romantic swain later in the novel is not a mere concession to reader expectations. If March behaves like a lover in a sterile romance, it is because March was raised on gyneolatry.

The most cherished motif employed by Southern poets in the "school of remembrance," which Daphne Dalrymple March's verse exemplifies, was that of the Southern landscape as a "ruined" and "ravished garden" (Hobson 11). It is part of the Southern self-consciousness Cable targeted in his speeches during the 1880's. The solution to the problems of the South and to the persistence of the "plantation idea" was not a New South, Cable believed, but a "No South" ("Literature in the Southern States" 44). For Cable knew that as long as Southerners thought of themselves as set apart from the rest of the union, a separateness which insistence on a peculiarly Southern endurance of a peculiar and unique tragedy served to reinforce, the entire network of class, race, and gender barriers would remain deeply rooted. The conventional picture of a post-war Southern landscape appears early in the novel, luring an unsuspecting reader with a thoroughly romantic image. On their way home from the surrender at Appomattox, Garnet and Ravenel pause on a battlefield near Suez:

> The sun shone exceptionally hot on the meagre waters of the Turkey Creek, where it warmed its sinuous length through the middle of its wide battle-field. The turnpike, coming northward from Suez, emerged, white, dusty, and badly broken, on the southern border of this waste, and crossed the creek at right angles. Eastward, westward, the prospect widened away in soft heavings of fallow half ruined by rains. The whole landscape seemd bruised and torn, its beauty not gone but ravished. . . . About the embers of a burned dwelling, elder, love-pop, and other wild things spread themselves in rank complacency, strange bedfellows adversity had thrust in upon the

> frightened sweet-Betsy, phlox and jonquils of the ruined garden.
>
> (JMS 11)

The Old South lies in ruins. Its gentle cultivation has been invaded by uncontrolled and wild disorder. The entire imagery of raped tranquility, of a civilization laid to waste, could have been taken from any one among many Reconstruction romances, including Page's Red Rock. But later in the novel, Cable presents another wasteland, this one the product not of war but of improvident industrialization. This time, after Southern gentlemen had succeeded in overturning the "bottomrail" from the top, the cost of the devastation is measured in human suffering, not in fallow fields and frail garden flowers. The viewpoint is John March's, who is himself half ruined by the effort to reclaim his land; he overlooks the landscape around Suez from his sickbed, down the Swanee and towards Blackland.

> March never looked that way but he found himself staring at those unfinished smelting works. Smart saplings were growing inside the roofless walls, and you could buy the whole plant for the cost of its brick and stone.
>
> The north window view hurt still worse. The middle distance was dotted with half a dozen "follies" "for sale," each with its small bunch of workman's cottages, some empty, some full, alas! and all treeless and grassless under the blazing sun. Far beyond to the right, shading away from green to blue, rose the hills of Widewood - lost Widewood! - hiding other "tied-up capital" and more stranded labor.
>
> (JMS 469)

The Old South has collapsed, but its legacy reached into the New South and imposed upon the fruitless landscape the ruins of fruitless labor. Both Souths fell victim

to a fiction of wealth and splendor and to an ideology of freedom for an elect few based upon the enslavement and exploitation of many.

Cable's most obvious use of conventional romance material whose signification becomes oddly inverted occurs can be observed in his characterizations. John Wesley Garnet enters the novel as a somewhat pompous but generally harmless, typical country gentleman. In the hallway of Rosemont hangs a small cowhide whip, though Barbara remembers that the object had never been put to "fiercer use than to drive chickens out of the hall" (JMS 21). When Garnet returns after the war, he assembles his former slaves, much like Dr. Cary does at Birdwood, to assure them that the war had not changed their accustomed relationship of "humble trust and magnanimous protection" (JMS 25). Cornelius Leggett, however, ventures to suggest that something has indeed changed - "You see, Major, sence dis waugh done put us all on a sawt of equality" (JMS 33) - but before Leggett can complete the sentence, Garnet, the benevolent master, becomes enraged and whips him brutally. The moral of this incident, if it had occurred in the framework of a Pageian setting, is clear: Union interference with a stable and harmonious social relationship has brought about racial violence where there was none before. Carpetbagger and scalawag abuses turned the moderate Dr. Cary into an embittered opponent of all reform; Garnet, provoked by his servant's forgetfulness of the "lifelong gratitude" the former slave owes his master, whips Leggett not to punish him for his insolence but for having foolishly jeopardized the protection Garnet had been willing to extend even beyond emancipation (JMS 32).

Initially, Garnet and Leggett are characters drawn along the lines of familiar types. But while Cary is hopelessly cast adrift on the tide of changes in his world, Garnet suffers no such debilitating loss of identity, acquiring a greater fortune in the

New South than he had in the old. And unlike Page's fear inspiring freedmen, Moses and Sherwood, Cornelius Leggett develops an admirable side.

The relationship between these two is particularly important because both are so strongly derived from literary stereotypes. In many ways, Cornelius Leggett confirms the conventional image; his language is filled with comic pompousness, the kind of idiosyncracy which traditionally signalled the black man's touching flattery of his master, whose polished speech he imitates imperfectly, showing both his complete devotion and obvious inferiority. But Cable uses the corrupt English in which Leggett delivers longwinded discourses on political economy to present sound sense, while he makes clear that Garnet, who is "addicted to" the rhetoric of Christian evangelism and progress, conceals his moral corruption behind his equally longwinded oratory. Both Leggett and Garnet are lascivious scroundrels. But while Leggett inevitably marries the women he desires, Garnet carries on clandestine affairs with the wives of his friends and business partners.

In Leggett then, Cable gives his readers precisely what they have become accustomed to - an "uppity nigger" who sounds like a blackface comic. To "read" Leggett correctly involves a process of dissociating his human frailties from his essential humanity, his moral shortcomings from his political intelligence. This is the process required of John March as well. After he has received his beating from Garnet, Leggett revenges himself by whipping John. The boy thus suffers in a very literal sense for the sins of his fathers, and he does in another sense as well, for his hatred of Leggett drives him into the arms of Garnet. John March's learning process eventually leads him to recognize that Leggett is in the right and Garnet in the wrong, and more generally he learns to recognize meanings below the surface levels.

The issue is not how successfully or unsuccessfully Cable combined romance matter with realism, myth-supporting content and myth-countering elements, but how his novel works to undermine the long habit of mythmaking itself.

In Red Rock, Page portrays Reconstruction quite simply as an attempt to turn Southern society on its head; the established social hierarchy, with the white gentleman at the top and the black slave at the bottom, is inverted by radical outsiders, who install incompetent and corrupt freedmen in the legislature, thus destroying the moral foundation of legal rule and making outlaws and criminals out of honorable gentlemen like Steve Allen and Dr. Cary. One observer of the power struggle between white masters and their former slaves, remarks, "it's a war between decency in the wrong, and vulgarity in the right." In Page's view, Reconstruction policies had been designed to overturn the "natural" order of things before the war, when laws reflected the moral standards of "decent" white gentlemen. Under the rule of the "vulgar," meaning, according to Page, blacks, who were by nature morally inferior to whites, "decency" is in effect the equivalent of illegality. But the speaker who thus perfectly summarizes Page's argument is not Dr. Cary or Steve Allen, nor is it Page himself. It is Fannie Halliday in John March,Southerner (JMS 62). In Cable's novel the simple equation between a character's race and his or her moral standards does not hold. Garnet, the standardbearer of white "decency," is in fact the most "vulgar" character in the book. Cornelius Leggett, on the other hand, though by no means a paragon of morality, nevertheless consistently tries to work for the "right" ends. Morality, Cable suggests, is not simply a matter of race. In contrast with Page's argumentation, Cable submits that the South's prolonged agony following the collapse of the Confederacy is not to be blamed on the immorality of outsiders determined to overthrow the "natural" hierarchy in a biracial society but instead on the moral blindness of white Southerners themselves.

Even a truly "decent" gentleman like John March takes the "wrong" side at first, because he can not see beyond superficial differences in people. The blood-deep habit of prejudice, not a temporary intervention by the federal government, has brought the Old South to ruin. To read Fannie's comment in light of the Pageian argument is to misread it. Fannie herself supports her father's politics even though "decent" white Southerners like Garnet have branded him a scalawag.

Cable works within the perimeter of the conventional romance of the South, but, to the exasperation of Gilder, his gentlemen do not always act like gentlemen, his ladies are not always weak or pure, and his former slaves are not always either faithful retainers or loathesome reptiles. Yet they are all gentlemen, ladies, and former slaves still and, to the exasperation of some modern readers, they sometimes behave according to conventional roles. The plantation idea itself, like the literature that perpetuated it, relied on the inviolability of caste, race, and gender lines, on identities defined by preexistent norms, reinforced by compliance with codes of behavior. Cable attacks these forms by showing their distance from reality as well as their power to deprive people of individuality.

Some of Cable's characters, most notably Garnet and Leggett, use their pre-cast roles to conceal themselves, to deceive others. Others, like John March and those romantic belles Fannie and Barbara, strain against the confinement. John March, Southerner is, as Rubin recognized, the story of a young man who learns to distinguish between what seems and what is, who discards the elaborate fiction of Southerness and Southern identities that is his intellectual baggage so that he can accept people for what they are and reality for what it is.

The difficulty of this process is enacted and reenacted on all levels of the plot. Cable's characters are constantly the victims of mistaken identities and false appearances;

they constantly blunder into situations where things are not what they appear to be. And, as in all good satire, humorous situations are often played out against a serious background. Cable's treatment of miscegenation illustrates both points.

Neo-plantationists like Page and apologists for racial segregation like Thomas Dixon (author of The Leopard's Spots; 1903) raised the specter of the black rapist to justify racial violence as a means of protecting the purity of Southern womanhood. On the other hand, pro-abolition writers had always, as James Kinney observes, presented the unfortunate mulatto, the victim of miscegenation (212). Cable himself had used that figure in Honore Grandissimes' unhappy half-brother, the "f.m.c." But neither of the two myths appears in John March, Southerner. Cornelius Leggett is neither a threat to white womanhood nor does he a symbolize the rape of the black race by white slaveholders. Leggett's most notable feature is that his cleverness, which allows him to reap a profit even when he is set up for victimization.

In revenge for the beating he received as a child, John March devises a schoolboy prank to humiliate Leggett in front of the other Rosemont boys. By means of a counterfeit letter, March arranges for Leggett to meet his black half-sister Johanna, the latest target of Cornelius' ambling affections, in a secreted grove. On the night of the rendevous, March himself, disguised as Johanna, meets Leggett, plannning to frighten him at the appropriate moment by pretending to be the ghost of one of his previous wives. Yet Leggett is not taken in and suspects a trap. His decision to attend anyway is as nearly an act of heroic defiance as Leggett is capable of, and so is the proclamation he utters during the interview: ". . . I'd marry you [Johanna] ef you wuz pyo white! - Colo'line! - I'll cross fifty colo'lines whenev' I feels like it!" (JMS 99)

In a Pageian romance, the diffusion of racial, caste, and gender identities is a central symbol for the South's economic and political rape during Reconstruction. In

John March, Southerner the source of chaos is more often than not the individual's inability to discern the true nature of a situation. In another suggestive scene, involving Leggett and the violation of the color line, a white gentleman pays a nocturnal visit to the March home to serenade John's mother. The honorable Dinwiddie Pettigrew is unaware that the widow is not at home and that the silhouette he sees in her bedroom window belongs to Daphne Jane, the black maid, who has been trying on her mistress' gowns. Pettigrew confesses his love fervently and aloud, and Daphne Jane, mistaking the troubadour for her own lover, the ubiquitous Cornelius Leggett, replies in kind. The two "lovers" meet in a dark hallway and embrace ardently before they discover their error. The incident is observed by Leggett who knew that Daphne Jane was at home alone and who does not hesitate to turn Pettigrew's embarrassment into financial profit for himself.

The widow's would-be suitor is not the only white gentleman Leggett blackmails. In the hands of a Faulkner, Leggett would no doubt have become Garnet's son. For Faulkner, who used the theme in Absalom, Absalom!, miscegenation would become the symbol for the "lie" at the heart of the plantation idea. The discovery of that lie destroys Thomas Sutpen's "design." Here it is Leggett who has found out Garnet's hidden guilt, the concealment of the mixed up land titles. Leggett's mystifying power, his near invulnerability despite his defiant attitude toward Garnet, derives from his possession of the truth and his willingness to keep it concealed.

All of Cable's major characters are either victims of delusions or design delusions to deceive others. Cable's portrait of the "real South" becomes all the more effective for showing how the long-standing habit of allowing the truth to appear in the appealing varnish of myth still impedes the emergence of a radically new South despite superficial changes.

John March grows up in an atmosphere diffused by his mother's murky sentimentalism and his father's patient waiting for the opportune moment when his dream could become a reality. March resembles the South itself after Appomattox, "looking backward even while working for the future, still gracious and noble, full of high sentiment, but without energy, filled with melancholy" (Hobson 113). The land John March inherits is itself a piece of a distant past. The 100,000-acre Widewood tract resembles the ur-American wilderness of the frontier, thinly populated, largely untouched and untamed. Cable describes it in a rhetoric that is reminiscent of colonial promotional tracts.

> Much of the stuff that fables and fairy tales are made of was the actual furnishment of [March's] visible world - unbroken leagues of lofty timber that had never heard the ring of an axe; sylvan labyrinths where the buck and the doe were only half afraid; copses alive with small game; rare openings where the squatter's wooden plowshare lay forgotten; dark chasms scintillant with the treasures of the chemist, if not the lapidary; outlooks that opened upon great seas of billowing forest, whence blue mountains peered up, sank and rose again like ocean monsters at play; glens where the she-bear suckled her drowsing cubs to the plash of yeasty waterfalls that leapt and whimpered to be in human service, but wherein the otter played all day unscared; crags where the eagle nested; defiles that echoed the howl of wolves unhunted, though the very stones cried out their open secret of immeasurable wealth; ...
>
> (JMS 47-8)

This garden is radically different from the one found in sentimental apologist romances. Instead of invoking ravished plantation fields and overgrown rosegardens, Cable appeals to what Annette Kolodny has defined as the peculiar American pastoral, distinct from the European literary pastoral in that it "holds at its very core the promise of fantasy as daily reality" (7). John's problem is that this paradise really exists; and as a

consequence, he must do something with it. Widewood holds the potential for unlimited wealth and, more than that, it contains the meaning the American wilderness has always had for those who sought to possess it: "a realm of nurture, abundance, and unalienated labor within which all men are truly brothers" (Kolodny 4). For March then, his inheritance represents above all a responsibility, which quickly becomes a burden. As others before him, March faces "an inevitable paradox: the success of settlement depended on the ability to master the land, transforming the virgin territories into something else" (Kolodny 7). To commit the potential to actuality meant, in other words, inevitably to destroy the promise wherein the land's original attraction resided. Habituated to a perpetual state of expectation by generations of March landowners who had preserved the potential unaltered, who had resisted sale and exploitation and settlement by anything but a community of "true brothers" enjoying truly unalienated labor, John March finds it very difficult to do anything at all.

Cable chose to represent his quintessential Southern landscape as a wilderness rather than as a plantation for obvious reasons. Advocates of the need for continued racial domination and the maintenance of a landed aristocracy had long employed the plantation garden, purportedly a "familial" household composed of protectors and protected, combining resources in blissful isolation from the alienating, corrupting world without. Instead of recalling this fiction of an Edenic plantation South, Cable stresses the extent to which the South had failed to develop the promise its landscape held. Cable was by no means alone in characterizing the predominantly rural South as a region arrested in the frontier stage of development. Walter Hines Page and others who like Cable advocated industrialization and social reform, the abandonment of the South's narrow agrarian economy without falling into the opposite evil of unchecked

industrialization and urbanization, insisted that the Old South had by and large left the potential for development untouched.

As John March, with agonizing slowness, carries the promise his inheritance holds toward actualization, the land's meaning undergoes a series of transformations, each of which maintains the strong overtones of maternal and virginal imagery inherent in Cable's initial description of Widewood, the sphere associated as much with John's childhood fantasies come true as with the promise of his fulfillment as an adult. The first impulse that moves March into action is Fannie Halliday's rejection of his love. Fannie herself offers the land as a substitute for his passion. She offers him the love of a sister and counsels him to devote his energy to the development of Widewood. Thus John sets to work in earnest, determined to prove himself a better man than Jeff-Jack Ravenel by transforming the virgin wilderness. He fantasizes that the time will come when Fannie has been widowed and returns to him so that they can live together on Widewood in a home they will share with his widowed mother. His mother, however, offers a contradictory identification. She warns her son that there are two things which would drive her to marry again. One is the invasion of the land by "aliens"; the other is John's decision to become married himself. Thus the association of the land's potential with sexual allurement is countermanded by its association with maternal affection. Cable's hero is caught in a paradox that makes it impossible for him to act without incurring guilt. On the one hand, the successful development of the land's resources allures as a measure of March's virility. On the other, March recoils at the thought of violating a maternal sphere. In other words, March experiences the Widewood landscape in much the same way that colonial settlers had experienced the New World they had seen described in promotional tracts as a virginal space inviting possession and transformation and as a maternal garden resisting transformation and promising soothing

engulfment and nurture (Kolodny 5). John March, Southerner enacts not only Southern social history but a fundamentally American experience. Yet the response March devises, his reaction to the paradox, is, one might argue, idiosyncratically Southern.

During the night after his mother's warning, March begins to work on a concrete plan for his land development. He has determined to find a middle path, a plan according to which the transformation of the virginal land is minimalized. Or, in terms of the plot, he has decided to bring settlers to his land but to resist once and for all the sexual allure Fannie holds, and even more so, Barbara Garnet, for she, unlike Fannie, is obtainable.

The plan March finally carries into the marketplace contains the virtues Cable himself endorsed as the direction which the South should take. It proposes the realization of the land's mineral and agricultural wealth in conjunction with a development of adquate social institutions. "It does not offer swift enrichment to the moneyed few through the use of ignorant labor unlifted from destitution and degradation, but rather the remuneration of capital through the social betterment of all the factors of a complete community" (JMS 223). But Henry Fair, who thus assesses the proposal's virtues, also swiftly recognizes its flaw. It is not an undivided pursuit of profit and thus it will not engage the interest of Northern capital upon which March's scheme depends.

John March is attempting to construct a community that is, if not autonomous, the nearest thing to it. Widewood will be cleared for industrial and agricultural production. But all social and cultural relations, stores, banks, schools, and churches, will remain under the "patronage and control of the company" created by March and the members of his community (JMS 223). Fair warns March that the scheme "will not pay." Such a community will not bear profit because its commitment to the capitalist marketplace,

which solely dominates the society surrounding it, is restrained. March is proposing a modified version of the plantation household, in which members pool their resources for the common good and are united by a pervasive family feeling. Widewood is to become as nearly an "organic" community as possible, in but not of the market place. March's plan would no doubt have met Gordon Keith's approval.

The ambitious and enthusiastic landowner draws up an elaborate and colorful map of his colony and rents an office on the main street of Suez. The sign on his door proclaims no occupation, no commodity for sale, but merely his name, to which Rosemont schoolboys add the word "gentleman." He has entered the marketplace, but he has not become a part of it. Others around him are known by the way in which they make their living; the gentleman John March is known by the manner of his life.

Cable's professional Southern gentleman is, like John Richling in Dr. Sevier, a good man, far superior to the Garnets and Leggetts around him who compromise ideals for the value of a dollar, who seek gain unecumbered by, or in Leggett's case, mixed with concern for others. In John March, Cable has created the gentleman who possesses all of the qualities romancers of the South had always attributed to him. His motives are pure and honorable; he is as free from the temptations of greed as he is from those of the flesh, in all ways the opposite of the "acquisitive Yankee." He never sinks the man into the business and enters the business world, as his sign proclaims, whole, without disjunction between his moral and his occupational self. But because John March, the gentleman, is so completely unaffected by the corruption that surrounds him, he is also wholly unable to affect changes. The purity of his motives becomes sterility; his innocence of the temptations of greed as well as of the flesh becomes, as is shown nowhere more clearly than in his role as Barbara Garnet's reluctant lover in New England while her father "rapes" his land in Dixie, a form of impotence. John March

does indeed offer an early vision of Quentin Compson, especially when he is most the "romantic swain." But John March, Southerner concludes with a hint of optimism. March commits suicide only in the sense that his creator, Cable, sees fit to call attention to his fictionality at the last moment by interjecting a narrator who reports upon hearsay that March's influence in Dixie "was not only strong but fine" (JMS 506). The sudden shift in point-of-view in the final chapter forces upon the reader the realization that the rest of the story, preceding the romantic conclusion, has been told by a narrator whose authority is questionable because it has never been convincingly established. Whatever strides toward critical realism Cable has made in John March, Southerner are seriously undermined by the sudden emergence of a posited author without sufficient credibility, yet it is particularly this kind of experimentation that could be seen as further evidence of Cable's importance as a precursor to Southern literary modernism.

What is clear is that the gentleman-ideal, in which Page believed because he was convinced that the plantation had indeed been Arcady, was for Cable at worst a smoke-screen, a public image of virtuousness men like Garnet used to conceal their private corruption. At best, as exemplified by a John March, whose ancestors had declined to own slaves and had instead preserved a piece of the ur-American wilderness, the ideal possessed "the virtue of impotency" (JMS 481).

In many ways, March's fall from innocence into reality echoes the experience of much earlier gentlemen who set out to realize the unlimited potentials of the untouched wilderness. Captain John Smith also found that the very limitlessness of the continent harbored its own unlooked for dangers, as his fellow colonists became heedless of their immediate needs in a blind pursuit of unattainable desires. Smith was a practical realist. To mark off the potential from the actual, he established a boundary, an enclosure within which work performed meant measurable social value. March also needs to establish

such a boundary and learn to work for his idealistic goals in terms of practical realities, not romantic dreams.

Like many others, March has allowed himself to become blinded by a romanticized vision of what the South had been. He had carried the dream of Arcady within and believed himself to be in possession of the means to make it a reality. But only when he has lost his land does March learn to see clearly not what the South was or what it could become, but what it is. On his sickbed, overlooking the streets of Suez and the ruins left behind by its shortlived economic boom, March tells Fair: ". . . right down there in those streets truth and justice are lying wounded and half-dead, and the public conscience is being drugged!" (JMS 483) If there is a function for the virtue March embodies it is to act as that "public conscience," to restore "truth and justice" to a South that has long lived without either. Men like March, Cable thought, were needed to pilot the South between the dual threats of stagnation in past ways of thinking and unquestioning acceptance of the gospel of progress. March represents neither the Pageian belief in the immutability of a social order in which work's association with man's fallen condition provides the basis for the subordination of the many to the few, honorable gentlemen who are models of civilized conduct and less sinful than others, nor does he come to represent a complete separation between man's "moral nature" and his "livelihood." March becomes a kind of moral barometer in Dixie, an advocate in particular of racial justice. Once March has learned to separate his private ambition for self-realization from the social value of his project, he assumes a place in society defined not exclusively by his gentlemanliness (i.e. his privileged position) but primarily by contributions measurable in terms of social value (i.e the performance of work).

March learns to sort out of his baggage the worst aspects of his Southern heritage, but he remains a loyal Southerner. "[W]hen our value is not mere wages," he

tells Henry Fair, "it isn't every man who's got the unqualified right to pick up and put out just whenever he gets ready" (JMS 483). March had been raised to feel that he held a special responsibility for his native region. He has had to learn to separate that responsibility from his personal interests and he has had to learn how to base his claim to authority on productivity and not on potential alone. But he declines to follow Fair to the North. Honor holds him to Suez. "We Southerners," he tells Fair, "don't believe one man's as good as another; we think one man in his right place is worth a thousand who can't fill it. My place is here!" (JMS 483) Cable knew of the Southern proclivity for gathering around its Colonels and Captains, its gallant leaders, its gentlemen. Despite its notorious ambivalence, the word "gentleman" held a greater and more specific signification in the South than elsewhere in the nation. Particularly in the decades following the Civil War, when this model of masculinity had been militarily defeated, Southerners, as attested by numerous revisionist histories published and monuments erected to the honor of the gentleman heroes of the war, looked for a renewal of faith in themselves as a people in worship of these symbols, representing the aspirations of their society. March is to be seen as such a symbol, the representative Southerner; his task will be to represent the aspirations of the whole society, however, and not, as Page's gentleman, the anxieties of the Anglo-Saxon race amidst the vicissitudes of a postlapsarian age.

FIVE: The Battle-Ground - Arcady Recalled

In her autobiography, written in 1944 and published posthumously in 1954, Ellen Glasgow recalls having felt that the "American literary scene had become a kindergarten" during the eighteen-nineties. "Romances whirled madly. Everybody was happy. Nobody wished to be different. . . . All America had dropped back into adolescence in fiction." In the South, she thought, the situation was even worse, for "there was not only adolescence to outgrow, there was an insidious sentimental tradition to live down" (The Woman Within 103-4). Glasgow herself had grown up, during the 1880's, immersed in the "archaic memorials" of the distant "yet lingering fragrance of the Old South" whose "imperishable charm" she had grown to love even while she "revolted from its stranglehold on the intellect." The members of her extended family made up "a chanting chorus of male and female voices" recollecting the ruined splendor of their aristocratic past. Among them Glasgow remembers one grand-aunt in particular, a woman of "lugubrious bearing, as unlike the Southern belle in fiction as one could imagine," who always reminded her of "a speckled engraving of Hecuba Lamenting over the Ruins of Troy" (A Certain Measure 12).

During the late 1890's, Glasgow weighed in to the American literary scene with three novels that dared to be "different" from the perceived norm, unsentimental about Southern traditions and critical of the spirit of optimism "industrial conquest" had generated in the South even while the aristocratic ideal remained timeless if only because

it "had been forsaken by time" (A Certain Measure 13). Two of the three, The Descendant (1897) and Phases of an Inferior Planet (1898), are not set in the South, and were therefore not included in Glasgow's retrospective plan for a social history of Virginia in fiction. But with her third novel, The Voice of the People (1900), she had discovered the subject that would become her major theme for the chronicle: "the rise of the middle class as the dominant force in Southern democracy" (A Certain Measure 4). Following The Voice of the People in order of publication, but preceding it in the chronology of Glasgow's fictional history, are The Battle-Ground (1902) and The Deliverance (1904), which cover the years from, respectively, 1850 to 1865 and 1878 to 1890 (A Certain Measure 3). The Battle-Ground dramatizes "the last stand in Virginia of the aristocratic tradition" during the Civil War (A Certain Measure 13). In The Deliverance, which features a member of the rising middle class in the role of a villain bearing more than a passing resemblance to Page's Hiram Still, Glasgow's subject is the period of "violent transition" that followed the decline of the aristocracy (A Certain Measure 35).

As historical novels, neither The Battle-Ground nor The Deliverance measures up to the standard of realism demanded by Georg Lukacs, according to whom historical novels must show "fidelity in the reproduction of the material foundations of the life of a given period" (167). Not many, perhaps not even one hundred, families in Virginia lived in the genteel manner Glasgow's Amblers and Lightfoots enjoy in The Battle-Ground during the decade preceding the Civil War, and Christopher Blake, the disinherited tobacco planter who descends from leisured gentlemanliness to the status of sweating laborer in the fields, is hardly representative of his age or his class. But what Glasgow does reproduce with unimpeachable "fidelity" is the romantic legend of the South, historical reality as filtered through the neo-aristocratic ideology in whose glow

she had been brought up and whose "intimate feeling for the spirit of the past and the lingering poetry of time and place" she never ceased to admire. Only because she was herself so deeply immersed in the ideology of romance was she able to oppose its excessive sentimentality and "evasive idealism" (The Woman Within 104).

Ellen Glasgow always insisted that she was neither "a pure romancer" nor "a pure realist." Instead, she referred to herself as "a verist," because "truth must embrace the interior world as well as external appearances" (A Certain Measure 28). In her autobiography, Glasgow lamented that American fiction during the 1890's had neglected to "examine," to "interpret," its own period in history "in terms of reality," adding parenthetically, "by which I do not mean literary 'realism'" (103). By thus drawing a line between "realism" and "reality," Glasgow acknowledges that literary realism, as much as the insipid traditional formula romance she rejected, has its own ideology. The kind of realistic writer whose ideology and methodology Glasgow found as objectionable as the uncritical neo-plantationism promulgated by Southern romancers is best exemplified by Hamlin Garland, who occupies a position directly opposite to Thomas Nelson Page on the romanticism-realism scale. Interestingly, Garland called the realistic writer a "veritist," though few parallels, beyond the similarity of the labels, can be constructed between his work and Glasgow's. According to Larzer Ziff, Garland felt ". . . that to champion veritism was equivalent to shouting that the past is dead and has no bearing on the present" (102-3). And that, despite her revolt against sentimental nostalgia, Glasgow was not ready to do. She is nowhere more visibly a pre-modern writer than in her quest for a literature that transcends ideology entirely, that is neither romantic nor realistic but "instinctively rejects every formula, including its own, and . . . has triumphed over and absorbed the nature of facts" (A Certain Measure 28).

Glasgow's method, following her own prescription for what Southern fiction needed most, was to introduce irony into a literary culture that had "grown thin and pale" and was "satisfied to exist on borrowed ideas" (A Certain Measure 28). Irony, as Ross Chambers observed recently, "can only be produced relationally; that is, it is necessarily mediated" (19). In The Battle-Ground, Glasgow generates irony by placing into dialectical juxtaposition the romantic aristocratic legends of antebellum plantation life and the heroic Civil War and realistic images of the "material foundations" upon which these legends rest. The process by which myth and actuality illuminate and interpret each other to reveal "reality" remains largely under the control of the novel's narrator, who creates irony from without. In The Deliverance, a book which is far more interesting from the psychological perspective than its predecessor, this process is interiorized; that is, it becomes a function of a process of psychological maturation in which the hero, Christopher Blake, learns to perceive "reality" by liberating himself from two modes of perception that equally prevent him from perceiving the truth. Blake is "blinded" on the one hand by "evasive idealism" and on the other (ironically) by an inability to see beyond the material circumstances of his present existence.

Taken together, The Battle-Ground and The Deliverance form a single *Entwicklungsroman*. Dan Montjoy, the central character in The Battle-Ground, is an adolescent romantic who matures into disillusioned manhood through his experiences in the Civil War. That disillusionment, which for Montjoy at the end of the novel becomes the starting point for the discovery of his true identity, in contrast with the institutionalized self of the Virginia gentleman his pre-war education had made him, has turned into a disabling spiritual stasis for Christopher Blake, who, because he was too young to participate in the war himself, reached his maturity in the years when the New South raised itself from the ruins of the old one. Blake faces a dilemma that is

reminiscent of Cable's John Richling in Dr. Sevier, the psychological need, seemingly impossible to satisfy, to reconcile "doing what he likes" and "liking what he must do" in order to make a living for himself and his family.

Our understanding of Christopher Blake, in contrast with our understanding of a gentleman hero like Page's Gordon Keith for instance, is thus no longer dependent on Blake's identity as a Southern gentleman. His search for a way to escape the drudgery of work, his dream of a life free from necessity compelled labor, is not inextricably bound to the particular moment in Southern history he inhabits. But the solution Glasgow devised, the way out of the spiritual stasis that afflicts Christopher Blake, is. It is, furthermore, bound by a theme that occupied Glasgow around the turn of the century as much as it did Page during the same decade: a reconsideration of the Southern gentleman ideal in the context of the reconciled union, a reexamination of the gentleman as a model of civilized manhood in a civilization that privileged productivity over honor as the measure of virility.

Glasgow's solution takes us down a familiar road at the end of the novel. Christopher Blake's patrimony is restored to him in much the same way that John March's was; a sudden flash of romantic love sweeps away all obstacles and unites him with his enemy's granddaughter, the woman he has loved all along. For those who see in Ellen Glasgow a precursor to Faulkner and the Southern renascence, that resolution has always been a source of considerable embarrassment. Julius Rowan Raper finds the ending of The Deliverance marred by an "excess sentimentality" that might have been "more naturally expressed as open love between races and/or sexes" (Without Shelter 198). According to Raper, Glasgow's plotting in both novels is borrowed from popular romances in order to "titillate the 'predominantly female audience' for which most historical fiction in America has been written" (151). As enlightened and enlightening as

Raper's views of Glasgow's work are in general, his explanation still suggests a rejection of Glasgow's romantic plotting on ideological rather than intellectual grounds. To reassess Glasgow's treatment of the Southern gentleman without trivializing its "popular" or "sentimental" aspects, it is helpful to place Christopher Blake's "deliverance" from his estrangement within the modern disjunctions between work and play into the context of the whole *Entwicklungsroman*, beginning with the antebellum chapters of The Battle-Ground.

An unsuspecting reader may be drawn into the novel under the impression that The Battle-Ground is simply another conventional plantation romance. The first two of the novel's four books portray life on two plantations, Chericoke and Uplands, in the upper South during the 1850's. The setting in which dramatic action is generated by a romance developing between members of two neighbouring plantation families has a long tradition, reaching from Page's Red Rock and Birdwood back to the origins of the plantation novel as a genre in Kennedy's Swallow Barn and The Brakes and George Tucker's Beechwoood and Elms (The Valley of Shenandoah, 1824). The pervasively friendly, albeit not always unproblematic, relations between the two families usually provide not only the framework for the inevitable love story but also a reinforcement for the suggestion that Southern civilization was characterized as a network of familialy interrelated yet independent households.

Uplands, a "long stuccoed house set with detached wings in a grove of maples" that partially conceals it from the highroad, is the domain of Peyton Ambler, a moderate, pro-Union Whig, who has, as the novel opens, given in to his wife's pressure and decreed that his slaves shall be freed after his death (BG 17). Peyton and Julia Ambler have two daughters: Virginia, a fair-haired beauty who serves as the traditional symbol of the romantic South, and her sister Betty, a tomboyish red-head, who compensates

with her superior sense for what she lacks in flawless feminine beauty. The white members of the household also include two maiden aunts, a fixture in plantation novels that has survived far into the literature of the modern South, who tend the rosegarden and read historical romances, secretly admiring the ravishing villains above all others. Finally, there is Julia Ambler's brother, Mr. Bill, a shy man with a hobbyhorsical passion for angling that strongly recalls Laurence Sterne's Uncle Toby.

In the way Page complements the moderate Dr. Cary with the fiery General Legaie in Red Rock, Glasgow pairs Peyton Ambler with a Southern Hothead in Major Lightfoot, the master of Chericoke. While Ambler would sooner send all slaves back to Africa than sacrifice the Union to his privileges as a slave-holding gentleman, Lightfoot remains an ardent defender of the gentleman's right to own slaves despite the growing pressure from without and within the South. The greater that pressure grows the more impassioned become the Major speeches. William L. Yancey replaces Addison as his chief source of quotations. When Ambler warns that the defense of slavery will lead to war and thus bring ruin to Virginia, Lightfoot dismisses him impatiently: "Ruin, sir? Nonsense! Nonsense! We made the Union, and we'll unmake it when we please. We didn't make slavery; but if Virginia wants slaves, by God, sir, she shall have slaves" (BG 86).

As the story opens, Dandridge Montjoy, the Major's grandson, arrives at Chericoke on foot in the middle of the night, to live with his grandparents. On a Christmas Eve twelve years before, Jane, his mother, had eloped with her lover in defiance of her parents' wishes. "That dirty scamp Montjoy," as Lightfoot calls him, had then in reality proven to be a scoundrel who beat his wife and abandoned his son after her death (BG 22). From his mother Dan has learned to value the Lightfoot pride. He remembers her "merry eyes" and her "insolence" as her husband "struck her . . . and

her blood gushed from her temple" (BG 30). Dan imbibed in his childhood a plethora of family legends, stories of remembered greatness, through the telling and retelling of which his mother had found the strength to resign herself to her own fate. According to Jane, the Lightfoots had once been "more important than the Washingtons"; Chericoke, though a "simple gentleman's home" and "not so imposing as Uplands" was, more importantly, the older of the two and had been built "of brick that was brought all the way from England" (BG 30-31). In the parlour at Chericoke, where "grandmamma danced a minuet with General Lafayette," Great-Aunt Emmeline had written her "refusal to an English Earl" and decided instead to marry Harry Fitzhugh, though he could offer her "nothing except love." In the boy Dan these stories have kindled a strong desire to live in a world such as that, to be a gentleman like his grandfather, and thereby to erase the stain of his Montjoy blood. The pathos of Jane's struggle to forget the present by reliving the past is heightened when the reader comes to suspect that her ill-advised elopement had its origin in her own desire to imitate the legendary Aunt, who had taken her diamond ring and carved the words "Love is best" into the pane of a window that has never been opened since in fifty years (BG 31). For Dan, Aunt Emmeline captured "the abiding presence" of Chericoke even long before he had ever seen the place. The attentuation of heroic legend into the thin veneer of romance, upheld and rehearsed time and time again, invokes the image of a culture that has long made a habit of denying reality. Thus in the hall of Chericoke there hangs a portrait, not of a martial founder of the line, like the "man in armour" whose picture dominates the hall of Elphinstone or the "Indian Killer" above the hearth of Red Rock, but of Great Aunt Emmeline, "in amber brocade, as Venus with the apple in her hand" (BG 32).

Glasgow herself paints in a pleasant and alluring portrait of antebellum Virginia, including all the details of the cherished pastoral image of country life, the grace, the

beauty, and the charm, but reality lies visibly beneath the image. That image, however, is all a man like Major Lightfoot is capable of perceiving. His blindness is caused by his conviction that manners inevitably reflect moral principles, and this inability to recognize the difference between appearance and reality frequently serves as a source for Glasgow's undercutting irony. Lightfoot rarely visits Uplands without complimenting Ambler that his wife, Julia, "is an angel and . . . gets lovelier every day" (BG 19). But a few pages thereafter, Glasgow's narrator describes Julia Ambler's figure as "worn and fragile": " She moved with a slow step, as if her white limbs were a burden, and her head, with its smoothly parted bright brown hair, bent like a lily that has begun to fade" (BG 24-5). The illusion that clouds Major Lightfoot's vision of the feminine ideal is the perennially young Emmeline; the reality is the plantation mistress who "of all the souls on the great plantation . . . alone had never rested from her labors" (BG 25).

Though Peyton Ambler is in many ways less blind than the "flattering Lightfoot," it is his wife who urges him to free his slaves in his will. In appearance Peyton Ambler is an embodiment of the conventional country-gentleman: "a small, soldierly- looking man, with a clean-shaven, classic face" and a "singularly boyish" figure held erect with "simplicity, almost august" (BG 17). He had been governor of the state ten years before and "to his friends and neighbours the empty honour, at least, was still his own" (BG 18).

The picture of field hands at Uplands, not in the fields of course but in the lighted barn at dusk "strumming upon their banjos" after the day's work, must be seen in conjunction with another scene, featuring Aunt Ailsey, the "conjure woman," four pages earlier. The joyful servitude of the Uplands slaves is revealed as an illusion in light of the reality evoked by Ailsey when she tells young Betty Ambler of her service under "Marse Noah": "I'se done wash en i'on Marse Noah's shuts twel I 'uz right stiff in de

j'ints. . . . Marse Peyton's shuts warn' nuttin ter Marse Noah's!" Betty is impressed by the woman's age and suggests, "I reckon you're . . . 'most as old as God, ain't you?" But Ailsey knows better how to date the origin of her servitude: "Well, de devil, he ain' never let on his age, . . . but w'en I fust lay eyes on 'im, he warn' no mo'n a brat" (BG 13).

The association of work with man's fall from grace appears in several similarily veiled circumstances, barely disturbing the surface of the narrative which presents the more pleasant image of the plantation as an Edenic garden where all, master and servant alike, are removed from the pressure of necessity. The picture Glasgow draws is perfect in the way it captures the essential myth of the plantation as a space divinely set apart from the fallen world outside of its protective borders. In fact the picture is too perfect; it is overripe and sickeningly saccarine. The one member of the household whose calling it is to uphold both the physical and the spiritual sanctity of the place, the mistress, Julia Ambler, is herself nearly sapped of all her strength. Her husband observes mournfully that "she had drooped daily and grown older than her years." And he reflects that "the master might live with a lavish disregard for the morrow, not the master's wife."

> For him were the open house, the shining table,
> the well-stocked wine cellar and the morning rides
> over the dewy fields; for her the cares of her home
> and children and of the souls and bodies of the black
> people that had been given into her hands. In her gentle
> heart it seemed to her that she had a charge to keep
> before her God; and she went her way humbly, her
> thoughts filled with things so vital as the uses of her
> medicine chest and the unexpounded mysteries of salvation.
> (BG 48)

It is Julia Ambler who faces the "reality" of sickness and sin, while her husband, the master of Uplands, enjoys in full measure its Edenic detachment from the world.

The faint note of irony in this passage illustrates again how Glasgow has managed to turn the convention of the genre against itself. The revelatory moment when the plantation shows itself as an essential matriarchy whose degree of vitality is directly proportionate to the amount of personal strength the plantation mistress has invested in its functioning has had its place in the politics of the plantation novel since Kennedy's Swallow Barn. Mark Littleton, Kennedy's "impartial observer," remarks: "Whilst Frank Meriwether amuses himself with his quiddities and floats through life on the current of his humour," his wife, Lucretia, "rises with the lark and infuses an early vigor into the whole household." Littleton's admiration for his cousin Lucretia is evident: "Every thing at Swallow Barn, that falls within [her] superintendence . . . is a pattern of industry. In fact, I consider her the very priestess of the American system." But, like Julia Ambler, Lucretia Meriwether is herself anything but a picture of strength: ". . . she is a thin woman to look upon, and feeble; with a sallow complexion, and a pair of animated black eyes which impart a portion of fire to a countenance otherwise demure from the paths worn across it" (38-9). Though such passages generally simply elevate the mistress to a higher moral plane, suitable for chivalric worship, Julia Ambler's martyrdom is less than credible. "In her gentle heart it seemed to her" that the responsibility she bears is a divine charge, but could she have been mistaken? Could the burden that "had driven the bloom from her cheeks and the lustre from her eyes" have been imagined (BG 48)?

Glasgow's main point, however, is not to expose the moral corruption of slavery at the heart of the real plantation order but, a theme more relevant for the year 1902, to explode the illusion that had survived. The passage of time thus intrudes itself

repeatedly into the mythopoeic timelessness of the garden that had in reality, been "forsaken by time" (A Certain Measure 13). If, in accordance with the demands of the plantation myth, none of the slaves at Chericoke and Uplands are burdened by the need to provide for themselves, either physically or spiritually, there is one black man in the novel who is. Ironically it is Free Levi, aside from Aunt Ailsey, the only black character in the book who is not a slave and who is as consistently associated with the drudgery of making a living, with poverty, and with patient suffering as the slaves are with playful ease, material well being and "ubiquitous mirth." In a Pageian romance, glorifying the remembered splendor of plantation life, a figure like Levi might have served to point out the awful consequences living outside of the plantation Eden must have for the former slave. Within its protective borders, the black man has not a care; without, he becomes a slave to his needs for food and shelter. But from the perspective of 1902, the time of Jim Crow laws and increasing racism, the episode takes on a different meaning. It exposes not the cruelty of the master who set Levi free while selling his wife into the deep South, but the perversity of a society in which freedom makes of a black man an outcast and condemns him to perpetual poverty and labor.

While the literary plantation tradition has consistently portrayed the slave laborer through anything but his identity as a worker, Free Levi is completely identified with his work; each day finds him "toiling at his rude forge for the bread which he would to-morrow eat in freedom" (BG 222). For Levi, freedom means a life of ceaseless toil, but his work is his own and so is the value it produces, be it only his meagre crust of bread. The slave's work, on the other hand, remains invisible, concealed behind a pleasant facade of playfulness and mirth. If work determines the black man's identity outside the plantation garden, the slave, who is deprived of access to identity through work, has ultimately no identity at all.

It is characteristic of Glasgow's criticism of the plantation order that it stresses its economic rather than its moral sins. Such an emphasis, however, must not be taken as a sign of Glasgow's reluctance to confront the corruption at the basis of the old order squarely and to disassociate herself from its allure by making oblique the "reality" later Southern novelists exposed. Glasgow's novel must be read in the context of 1902, when a national (white) consensus had been reached that slavery as moral issue had in fact been satisfactorily settled by abolition. That consensus had all but obliterated concern for the economic crimes that slavery had engendered and that continued to affect the status of blacks in the South.

But it is not only the slave who has no individual identity within the boundaries of the plantation garden. Under the guidance of his grandfather, Dan Montjoy has received his education in the Virginia school of gentlemen. Because the old Major is understandably overindulgent, Dan's inherent hedonism has somewhat gone to seed, but he has become a Lightfoot, filled with the pride, the sense of honor, and the violent temper of that race. If Dan exaggerates the desired traits of gentlemanliness, he does so to compensate for a feeling of inferiority associated with his Montjoy blood. The code of gentlemanlines, which, as Mrs. Blake tells her son in The Deliverance, "embraces all morality and a good deal of religion," does in fact embrace all of Dan Montjoy's identity (D 479). The perceptive Betty Ambler, who loves Dan though she is keenly aware of his weaknesses, recognizes what is lacking in his character. "When you're neither Lightfoot nor Montjoy, you're just yourself," she tells him, "and it's then that I like you best" (BG 189). But Dan is never just himself; he is always either the "flattering Lightfoot" or the "rude Montjoy" (BG 195).

Dan's purpose in life is to be a gentleman, to live out a role predetermined by generations of gentlemen before him, and he is therefore only too content with the way

in which Betty describes his future: "I see a wellfed country gentleman who rises late to breakfast and storms when the birds are overdone . . . . He has a dozen servants to fetch the whip he drops, and a dozen others to hold his bridle when he pleases to dismount" (BG 171). Betty's "ideal man" is far different. The man of her dreams, she confides to an amused Dan, "will be . . . a man with a faith to fight for - to live for - to make him noble. He may be a beggar by the roadside, but he will be a beggar with dreams. He will be forever traveling to some great end" (BG 169-70).

As in Glasgow's representation of slavery, her portrayal of slaveholding gentlemen does not focus on a concealed evil, the hidden sin that often characterizes the past for the heirs to the gentlemanly code in modern Southern literature, but on blindness to evil. Neither Ambler nor Lightfoot, nor any of the other gentlemen in the novel, are patently corrupt or abusive. There is no suggestion of miscegenation or brutal punishment of slaves. Ambler has bought slaves from other plantations to save them from being sold deeper into the South, and Lightfoot whips another slaveowner for mistreating a slave. "There is no man alive that shall question the divine right of slavery in my presence," he tells the miscreant Rainy Day Jones, "but . . . it is an institution for gentlemen, and you, sir, are a damned scoundrel" (BG 89). Lightfoot's code of gentlemanly conduct simply precludes the possibility of recognizing slavery as evil. The insistence that masters treat their slaves humanely superimposes on slavery its own morality and makes it possible for Lightfoot to separate good from evil within the institution itself without ever considering it whole.

Even Peyton Ambler, who is consistently portrayed as the most humane of masters and the most moderate of politicians, is blind to the humanity of the men, women, and children he owns. During the night after the raid on Harper's Ferry, when rumors of an armed slave revolt have spread to Uplands, Ambler goes to the quarters to

look for his wife, who has answered a call to the bedside of an old woman. Since he does not know where Mahaley's hut is, he is forced to enter cabin after cabin in his search. Gradually it dawns on Ambler that he knows little of the lives that are lived there. When at last he finds Julia, he waits in "the shadow of the doorway" for his wife to finish her prayer: "Mahaley was dying, this he saw when his glance wandered to the shrunken figure beneath the patchwork quilt; and at the same instant he realized how small a part was his in Mahaley's life or death. He should hardly have known her had he met her last week in the corn field." For just a moment, Ambler recognizes his own civilized superiority to his slaves as unnatural and actually comes to see it as a disadvantage. Instead of life, birth and death and all between cloaked in "ceremonial trappings," these slaves live their lives "close to the soil," in a natural cycle of planting and harvesting where "grave things were sweetened by an unconscious humour which was of the soil itself" and where "even death lost something of its strangeness when it came like the grateful shadow which falls over a tired worker in the field" (BG 250). But even at that moment of truth, Ambler is incapable of seeing more than the difference between the slaves' communion with natural things and his own artificiality. The illusion that the slaves at least, if not their master, partake of a kind of organic existence in the plantation garden remains unquestioned in Ambler's mind.

Reality is all but impossible to discern without a romantic veil in the plantation garden. And so Dan Montjoy must leave Chericoke before he can begin to become "the ideal man" Betty sees buried in him beneath the superficial crust of conformity. Like Jacquelin Gray, Gordon Keith, and John March, Dan Montjoy loses the place he had felt himself entitled to by inheritance. And as is the case for these other displaced gentlemen, Dan's expulsion ultimately reveals itself as a fortunate fall. He disgraces himself in his grandfather's eyes by challenging a Virginia gentleman who had insulted a

barmaid to a duel. To the old Major that breech of manners - the honor of a barmaid is not a gentleman's business - is irrefutable evidence that Dan's "dirty (Montjoy) blood" could never be "made clean again" (BG 212). In reality, however, it is not Dan's lack of Lightfoot pride that finally drives him away from home; it is an excess of it, an excess equal to that of the Major's. As the two confront each other in the old gentleman's study, they are like two incarnations of the same spirit, "as if the spirit of the fiery old man had risen, in a finer and younger shape, from the air before him" (BG 210).

Storming away after the confrontation down the road that eventually would lead directly to Appomattox, Dan does resemble Betty's vision of the "beggar with dreams. . . . travelling to some great end - some clear purpose," but Dan's ambition is still only to redeem himself as a gentleman (BG 170). He envisions a moment in the future when he will return to Chericoke, covered with honors and crowned with achievement, to reclaim his place and his love. At the same time that Dan pursues this new illusion, signs of his real future become also visible, but Dan is too preoccupied with his fantasy to recognize them. Looking back from the road, the privileged outside perspective which always facilitates true perception in this novel, Dan sees Chericoke, "for a heartbeat," not in "the likeness of his home" but instead as "but a great mount of earth over which the wind blew and the dead leaves fell" (BG 220). In one sense, this vision is prophetic, foreshadowing Dan's return after the war to find the great house in ruins; but in another sense, the near complete blackness that envelopes the house and Dan symbolizes blindness as well as death. Chericoke and the civilization it represents are at this moment already dead, "forsaken by time," but, like Dan himself, unable to see that truth. As Dan marches down the highroad away from Chericoke and the past, he stops to borrow a lantern to light his path from Free Levi, who is, as always, working at his forge in the middle of the night, and as Dan moves on further, the "silence of the old

house" is replaced by the rhythmic sound of Free Levi's hammer, measuring time elapsing toward the moment of Appomattox (BG 220). Dan even feels a vague sense of kinship with Levi, a realization that he too is "leaving servitude behind him in the house at Chericoke" (BG 222).

By the end of Book II, Dan has run into a dead end. After his departure from Chericoke he has begun to approach the ideal man of Betty Ambler's vision, though he is himself still unaware of that fact. He is a "beggar" now, but he has no clear conception of how to achieve the "great end" for which he strives. He works briefly as a stagecoach driver, but the outbreak of war promises a far better opportunity to cover himself with the glory he considers a prerequisite to his triumphant return as a gentleman. For the novel itself, Book III marks a significant shift of setting. Readers who have objected to the plantation idyll have welcomed the change and hailed it as a sign of Glasgow's liberation from the constraints of conventional romance. Her account of the Civil War in the second half of The Battle-Ground has been compared to Crane's The Red Badge of Courage, though the brand of realism Glasgow introduces into her novel is perhaps more appropriately seen as a foreshadowing of Mary Johnston's The Long Roll (1911) and Cease Firing (1912), two of the most impressive Civil War novels in American literature. It is its second half, nevertheless, that has redeemed The Battle Ground at least partially as a work indicative of Glasgow's rank in the transition of Southern fiction from vacant sentimentalism to critical realism. Ellen Glasgow does manage to capture a true-to-life sense of military action as a series of prolonged spells of intense boredom interrupted by few periods of pitched battle, and yet in many other ways her account is hardly realistic by the standards of modern, or post 1915, writing about the meaningless brutality of war. While the romantic image of the plantation in Books I and II is consistently undercut by an ironically detached narrator, such

distancing is rarer and at times, for long stretches of text, completely absent in the second two books. Glasgow's description of Peyton Ambler's death, for instance, is practically indistinguishable in tone from passages in Cable's melodramatic Civil War romance The Cavalier (1901). Glasgow describes the war entirely from the Southern perspective. The focus is alternately on Dan Montjoy's experience at the front and on the "homefront" where women struggle to preserve the common life their men have taken uncommon means to defend. The enemy appears throughout as an anonymous foe in blue, unindividualized until after Lee's surrender at Appomattox, when Dan is fed by a kind Yankee soldier named Moriarty.

What is "realistic" about Glasgow's account is that she does not subscribe to the myth that had by the end of the century become accepted history, the myth according to which the Civil War had been a heroic and glorious struggle between two noble armies each fighting for a righteous cause. Southern faith in this legend, facilitated by Northern consent, had performed the important psychological work of compensating for the humiliation of military failure by glorifying the heroic struggle. The consciousness of tragedy as a sign of special election above other parts of the nation had given a renewed confidence to Southern pride in the post-war era (Hobson 12). Thomas Nelson Page, for example, simply avoids the paradox of defeat in Red Rock by avoiding the war itself and asserting only that it had turned boys like Jacquelin Gray and Steve Allen into real men.

Glasgow decided not to leave the war in the realm of the legend that had soothed the nation's conscience; thus it may seem ironic that the trope of the passage to manhood also stands at the center of her representation. For Dan Montjoy, the war is a formative process, a second education or *Bildung*, in which he becomes the man of Betty's dreams. He enters the war still the gentleman who sees everything, including

himself, from a plantation-bred point of view. He leaves it as "a man," "just himself," the fulfillment of the promise Betty had long recognized. No longer is he either - excessively proud of his Lightfood heritage or resentful of his rude Montjoy blood. But Dan's manhood is contingent upon Betty's power to restore to him "a faith to fight for - to live for - to make him noble." When he walks home from Appomattox, he no longer has a "clear purpose." He is conscious only that the worst is yet to come, "this sense of utter failure and the attempt to shape one's self to brutal necessity. In the future that opened before him he saw only a terrible patience which would perhaps grow into a second nature as the years went on" (BG 493). Gentlemanliness (the illusion) inverted to its antithesis (the reality) has "freed" Dan's manhood only to give him the freedom of a free Levi. On his way back to Chericoke, Dan hears the same hammer strokes, measuring the intrusion of time into the destroyed plantation idyll and foretelling his own future struggle "to wring the daily bread of those he loved, with maimed hands, from a wasted soil" (BG 493). Thus Dan's formative Bildung is not complete at this point; he does not return from the war an empowered hero ready to face the evils of materialism and exploitation as Page's gentlemen do in Red Rock. The synthesis which concludes the novel requires neither the Pageian idealization of the past nor yet what one might call the Northern solution, the denial of the past and a blind faith in regeneration through violence, but a reinterpretation of the past in the future.

Dan's second training in the "school of war" can be seen not only as myth-debunking or the transformation of the blind romantic aristocrat into a realist, as in Cable's John March, but also as movement from illusion to reality and beyond toward a synthesis at the end. In her essay on The Battle-Ground in A Certain Measure, Glasgow asserts her belief "that a heroic legend is the noblest creation of man." But that legend, she goes on to say, "must be recreated not in funeral wreaths, but in dynamic

tradition, and in the living character of a race" (12). Therein then lies the "reality" Glasgow sought, in the interplay of idealistic legend and its "material foundation."

One aspect of Dan's transformation from stereotypical gentleman to individual selfhood is his growing awareness of the social barriers erected by and for the protection of the slaveocracy. Glasgow has Dan enlist in an infantry regiment rather than in the more exclusively gentlemanly cavalry, because it offers a more concrete challenge to his class consciousness. The troop is commanded by the son of Rainy Day Jones, the ungentlemanly slaveholder whom Lightfoot had chastized for his abuse of the moral standards of slaveownership. Since Dan's body servant, Big Abel, has decided to follow his master not only into exile from Chericoke but even to the war, the small troop already anticipates in microcosm the post-war South. Risen to power is the representative of the middle class; the soldiers, most of whom are of Dan's class and would have considered Jones beneath their notice only a few weeks before, chafe under the authority of their lieutenant during the periods of inactivity before the first battle but ultimately resign themselves to their proletarian status for the sake of the greater "cause," the "abstract principle" all of them "embrace as fervently as they would embrace a woman" (BG 284). The only member of this "society" whose status has not undergone a significant change is Big Abel, who serves his white master by carrying him when he is wounded and, during the lean times when the collapse is near, by stealing what he can to feed him.

But Dan does learn to judge men by other standards than class and thereby also learns to make his own sense of self-worth independent from the subjugation of others. The one character who promotes this part of Dan's education most directly is a tall mountaineer soldier named Pinetop. Initially, Pinetop is the constant butt of the young gentlemen's jokes and witticisms. In fact, it is in the use of language as much as in

dress that the class differences are dramatized. The gentlemen are always joking, always witty; Pinetop is always dead serious and always literal. During the first day of the campaign, someone asks him: "Is it raining up there where you are?" And he replies calmly: "Naw, it's cl'ar" (BG 290). Just as Dan Montjoy eventually learns to eat Big Abel's "nigger food," he learns to value and befriend Pinetop, even to consider his sincerity superior to any form of artificial wit.

Though Glasgow makes her hero increasingly sensitive to the humanity of those his class had long regarded "in the light of an alien to the soil, not as a victim to the kindly society in which he himself had moved" and though Dan gradually gropes for the essential humanity in himself beneath the crusts of the institutionalized gentleman self, his "democratization" is not particularly convincing (BG 442). Truth comes to him in flashes of epiphanic insight. One evening during a lull in the fighting, he discovers that Pinetop has never learned how to read. Dan is shocked. In an instant the entire complacency of the moralistic code of honor, behind which he and the gentlemen he esteemed had hidden, becomes clear to him: "In his sympathy for the slave, whose bondage he and his race had striven to make easy, he had overlooked the white sharer of the negro's wrong. To men like Pinetop, slavery, stern or mild, could be but an equal menace" (BG 443). Pinetop's ignorance is a direct consequence of the slave ecomony, and for the first time Dan recognizes in slavery an absolute wrong, unredeemable by the relative lightness of the yoke. By having his eyes opened to the truth at this moment, Dan loses another layer of his inherited self-deception and recognizes the evil in the garden, but without thereby having to recognize his own complicity in the crime. With nothing to prevent him from feeling virtuous, he sets out to right the wrong he has perceived and begins to teach Pinetop to read. He even devotes his evenings to public

readings chapters from Les Miserables, eagerly attended by a spellbound audience of "gaunt, unwashed volunteers from the hills or the lowcountries" (BG 445).

For all this touching sympathy with the unwashed masses, it remains for Big Abel to remind Dan (and Glasgow's readers of 1902) how terribly deep the class and race divisions had become ingrained in Southern society. Abel's sardonic reply to Dan's suggestion that he would have to account to a higher authority for his theft of some bacon to feed both of them shows how completely the black man, who by that time could no longer be considered a slave at all, had internalized the morality of the slaveorder:

> Dar's somebody got ter do de stealin' in dis yer worl', . . . des es dar's somebody got ter be w'ite folks en somebody got ter be nigger, caze de same pusson cyarn be ner en ter dat's sho'. Der ain' 'oom fer all de yerth ter strut roun' wid dey han's in dey pockets en dey nose tu'nt up des caze dey's hones'. Lawd, Lawd, ef I'd a-helt my han's back f'om pickin' en stealin' thoo this yer wah, whar 'ould you be now - I ax you dat?
>
> (BG 403-4)

Another aspect of Dan Montjoy's institutionalized self that is exposed as an illusion and transformed, though not completely obliterated, by contact with reality is the romance of war. Before the first battle of Manassas, Dan partakes of the general spirit of optimism and exuberance that predicted confidently that the flower of Southern chivalry would drive the Yankee invader off its soil in a matter of "a few weeks" (BG 279). When Dan anticipates what the battle will be like, he sees before him an old engraving of "Waterloo" he had often seen at Chericoke: "That was war. . . . He saw the prancing horses, the dramatic gestures of the generals with flowing hair, the blur of the waving flags and naked swords. It was like a page torn from the eternal Romance"

(BG 296). On the long, dull march to the battle field, Dan notices a "little purple flower" blooming in the mud, which represents to him the promise of glory that lies ahead (BG 305). By the end of the battle, the image of the engraving has been replaced by the reality of war and the purple flower, "still blooming in the mud," has come to represent something else - the certainty of a long struggle, of the need for endurance and the difficulty of maintaining not the spirit of romance but of any form of civilization at all (BG 315).

The transformation Dan undergoes during his first battle encapsulates the dialectics of the entire war and ultimately of the text as a whole. First, the illusion (the engraving) is confronted with the reality of the battle. At the sight of the first wounded men returning from the frontline, Dan is aghast: "Why, they're no better than mangled rabbits - I didn't know it was like this" (BG 307). When he has entered the fight himself, shock yields to bewilderment. "If this was a battle," he wonders, "what was the old engraving? Where were the prancing horses and the uplifted swords?" (BG 311) As the thin veneer of romance vanishes, Dan's entire shell of civilized being disappears and in its place "the sleeping brute within him . . . the primeval instincts, throttled by the restraint of centuries . . . awoke suddenly to life and turned the battle scarlet to his eyes" (BG 312). Beneath the veneer of civilization lurks the savage self and Dan understands "why his fathers had loved a fight, had loved the glitter of the bayonets and the savage smell of the discoloured earth" (BG 326). But finally, the war and Dan's being in it take on a new meaning for him no longer through the image of the old engraving nor yet through "the old racial spirit," the sheer love of violence, disguised as patriotism or defense of honor, but through a "peculiar sensitiveness which had come to him from his childhood and his suffering mother" (BG 326).

As the war prolongs itself into long periods of marching, freezing, starving, and simply waiting for the few pitched battles that decide the military fate, Dan Montjoy fights an internal war against meaninglessness: "To Dan these terrible days were as the anguish of a new birth, in which the thing to be born sufferred the conscious throes of awakening life" (BG 342). At the beginning of the process stands Dan's stoically suffering mother; at the end stands Betty Ambler. Earlier in the novel, Glasgow had brought the two images, the virgin-like mother and the motherly virgin into conjunction. On the first day of his exile from Chericoke, Dan had remembered his mother, who had also chosen to abandon her home for a romantic passion that had been disappointed by reality. He recalls first his mother's "merry eyes" and then her death, "the clear white of her face . . . and the baby lying as if asleep upon her bosom;" then the image changes to become Betty, "with the tenderness in her eyes and the motherly yearning in her outstretched arms" (BG 230).

Once he has lost his passion for the "abstract cause" he had embraced as if it were a woman and he has begun the long struggle against the urge to give up the fight against meaninglessness, Dan sees Betty in his dreams, not as mother or virginal belle but with the ""despairing passion" of an abandoned lover: "He was haunted less by her visible image than by broken dreams of her peculiar womanly beauties - of her soft hands and the warmth of her girlish bosom" (BG 343).

The dreams of heroic conquest on a glorious battlefield are destroyed by a war that is not heroic, and in place of the illusion Glasgow offers her gentleman another kind of heroism, one that makes him nobler than a savage despair can and one that is at the same time more "realistic" than the heroism of a false chivalry. The agency of the transformation is the long-suffering mother; the prize, Betty Ambler.

Glasgow again permits her hero one of those epiphanic moments through which he always moves from a vision clouded by the romantic illusions of the past to a clear perception of truth. On the long march with Stonewall Jackson's army through northern Virginia, Dan awakens one morning to find his sleeping comrades covered by blankets of snow: ". . . there was something almost ghastly in the sloping fields filled with white graves and surrounded by white mountains. . . . It was like the first day - or the last" (BG 346). Here he leaves behind his old struggle of Lightfoot and Montjoy blood; suddenly nature stands out "with all the majesty of uncovered laws - stripped of the mere frivolous effect of light or shade" (BG 346). Dan feels "as a man might who had awaked suddenly among the dead . . . to find himself a man." And now he sees Betty again, but neither in the vision of virgin-mother that filled his earliest dreams in exile from Chericoke, nor in "detached visions" of purely sexual allure, but "entire and womanly" (BG 347).

As Julius Rowan Raper has shown, Glasgow's chief intellectual influence during the early years of her career had been the school of Darwinian thought and particularly the theory of Thomas Huxley. From her reading of Huxley, Glasgow had developed an interest in the distinction "between the savage state of nature and the artificial state of human civilization." And she had realized "that the sheltering traditions and institutions of man's society often permit him to forget the abyss of savagery over which his civilization is suspended" (From the Sunken Garden 6). Dan Montjoy's initial experience in the war had led him to a communion with the "abyss" making the "sheltering traditions and institutions," particularly of the gentlemanly self, transparent. Throughout her career, Glasgow created male characters who have managed to survive the abyss and become truly "civilized souls," natural without savage lack of control, civilized without artificiality. These men - Tucker Corbin in The Deliverance, John

Fincastle in Vein of Iron, and General Archbald in The Sheltered Life - having accomplished the kind of synthesis suggested here in the education of Dan Montjoy, are Glasgow's new gentlemen, men who represent an ideal of civilization but who remain free of the stultifying conventions of conduct that had institutionalized the traditional gentleman ideal (Measure 39).

Dan Montjoy's rebirth as a man, his "old childish petulance" replaced by "a kindly tolerance which softened even the common outlines of his daily life," shows in him too the stirrings of the "civilized soul" that the Civil War veteran Tucker Corbin possesses (BG 347). But Corbin, though whole and at peace in spirit, is physically only half a man. He left, along with his "petulance" and his former Hothead self, an arm and a leg on the battlefields of the war. Dan Montjoy, too, ultimately leaves a part of his masculinity behind before he returns to Chericoke.

Glasgow subverts the legend according to which Southern men emerged from the Civil War as models of male heroism by constructing a correspondence between Dan Montjoy's private battles and the course of the war in general. His "rebirth" occurs in the context of renewed hopes for the Confederacy. The Jackson campaign from Winchester in which Montjoy participates struck fear into the hearts of Union generals. Jefferson Davis had just sent Robert E. Lee to defend Richmond against McClellan. But the resurgence of confidence was short-lived, and on the long road that leads Dan's regiment to Antietam, the Wilderness, and finally Appomattox Courthouse, he and in fact the entire army around him look more and more like beggars by the roadside. Dan is still a man with a "faith to fight for," but his ennobling purpose has changed dramatically since the war's beginning.

The men who had set off to war were fired by a romantic passion. Their cause was to repell an alien invasion from Virginia's sacred soil, a soil that was charged with

specifically feminine meaning. Virginia Ambler becomes one symbol of that association. She is married, just before her beau, Jack Morton, rides off to battle, in a wedding gown which later serves as material for the flag of her husband's cavalry troop. Even Glasgow's poor white mountaineer, Pinetop, who never owned a slave and does not epecially care what happens to them or their owners, can explain his presence in the fight only by recalling "ole Virginny" as a female landscape to be protected from the invader: "I've got a powerful fancy for ole Virginny, and they ain't goin' to project with her dust, if I can stand between them" (BG 324). What Pinetop can not understand is why other Southerners, those who are not Virginians, have risen to arms. Glasgow seems to suggest that the interpretation of the cause as chivalrous protection of a feminine purity runs deeper than limited class- specific romanticism. What lies beyond the cause so conceived may be the pastoral fantasy Annette Kolodny sees at the roots of the American experience in the wilderness - the experience of the landscape as female body that also echoes through William Carlos Williams' In the American Grain (8).

The signs of the cause's failure are thus necessarily attended by the dissolution of this symbolic connection. During the bombardment of Richmond, Virginia, now very pregnant indeed, wanders feverishly through the city's streets searching for her husband among the many wounded and finally dies in a city where the only men left are the wounded and the dead. As "the flower of the South" fades, it is replaced by another symbol of the motive power which keeps the soldiers fighting (BG 284). That symbol is Robert E. Lee. Near the end of the war, when "Petersburg had fallen, Richmond was in flames behind them, the Confederacy was, perhaps, buried in the ruins of its Capitol," a single thought holds the army together and averts despair from the men, Dan Montjoy included: ". . . but Lee was still somewhere to the front, so his army followed"

(BG 462). The entire concept of Southern gentlemanliness, its honor, its pride, its power, is now vested by weakened and starving troops, for whom class distinctions among each other have lost all meaning, in the figure of Lee. This is no longer a war for the protection of female virtue; it has become, in Dan's mind at least, a purely masculine struggle for survival. The flag, once the symbol of a sexual union between the heroic fighter and his cause, has also become vested with a new meaning. It has become an emblem of suffering, the vestment of male pride in "the grapple with a courageous foe" (BG 492). At Appomattox, Dan rescues the flag from the battlefield and envelopes himself in its torn and faded silk. "The cause for which he fought, the great captain he had followed, the devotion to a single end which had kept him struggling in the ranks, . . . all these were bound up and made one with the tattered flag upon his arm" (BG 473).

Lee's surrender hits the men with the force of a loss of masculinity. The soldiers drop where they stand and cry like children. "I ain't blubberin' fur myself," says one, "but - O Lord, boys - I'm cryin' fur Marse Robert" (BG 477). Dan Montjoy feels "his future turn to decay before his manhood was well begun." The conventional "ruined garden" motif, signifying female purity ravished by a brutish male foe, is replaced by an association of the devastated land with Dan's lost masculinity: "His virile youth was wasted in the slow struggle, his energy was sapped drop by drop; and at last he saw himself burnt out like the battle-fields, where the armies had closed and opened, leaving an impoverished and ruined soil" (BG 478).

The cost of the war was not the purity of a once perfect civilization, but quite simply the physical strength of the men who fought it. The tragedy lies not in the disappearance of a noble race of gentleman, but in the waste of manhood.

The movement from thesis (Virginia and the identification of civilization with femininity) to antithesis (Lee and the complete masculinization of the war) then concludes after Dan's last epiphany, the realization that he has given his future for a way of life that lies dead in the past, with Glasgow's synthesis. Upon his return to Chericoke, Dan finds the old mansion in ashes but the Major and his wife Molly sitting in the overseer's house under the portrait of Aunt Emmeline, "the one vestige of a former greatness that still remained" (BG 504). Over the world of the two neighbouring plantations, "peace had descended" and with it a return to the working order of planting and harvesting. Dan finds that Betty has been "the abounding energy in the moving spirit of the place" (BG 499). She has taken on the management of both plantations and, as the Major assures Dan, with more efficiency than the former overseer Harris. In truth, Betty has assumed not only the role of the overseer but that of her dead father and of her mother as well, since the Upland slaves have, it seems, not abandoned the place but continue to work in the fields.

Once the superstructure of the old civilization, specifically the concept of leisure with its concomitant gender- and race- determined divisions, has been destroyed, Glasgow erects in its place a highly idealistic work ethic, a reconstruction of the garden without the walls, a civilized order based on performance and not on the denial of work. Dan, broken in pride as well as in body, is simply engulfed in the pervasive nurturing energy Betty personifies. And ultimately even Aunt Emmeline has a place in the new order. "Love is (still) best." At Betty's touch, "soothing him as a mother soothes a tired child," Dan revives instantly and attempts to embrace her ardently, yet Betty reminds him, "this time, my dear, we will begin together" (BG 512).

The Battle-Ground resembles the reconciliation romances of the early post-bellum period in which Southern writers reenacted a resolution of the sectional conflicts

that had exploded on the battlefields of the war on a "neutral territory." According to the familiar formula, Northern power and Southern grace united in the marriage between the gallant southernized Yankee officer and the Southern belle. Glasgow inverts that formula; more specifically, she inverts the variation of it employed by Page in Red Rock, where the Southernized Yankee is a woman, Ruth Welch, and the triumphant male is a Southern gentleman, Steve Allen, while the standard Southern belle, Blair Cary, is united with a northernized Southern gentleman, Jacquelin Gray. Common to all versions are the gender conventions - weak women requiring and finding protection in strong gentlemen of whatever geographic origins - that Page could count on as being acceptable to most of his audience. In Glasgow these conventions are turned upside down. Dan Montjoy's weakness finds refuge in Betty Ambler's strength.

Though Southerners did not, according to Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, "subscribe to emerging bourgeois notions about the nature of the spheres," they did share with Northerners and with Western civilization in general a belief that "defined male and female spheres constituted the bedrock of society and community" (195). Thus Page eulogizes the heroic work of women like Mrs. Cary who kept Birdwood operating during her husband's absence, but she is only too happy to resign the scepter upon his return and to take up her place under his ultimate protection and authority again. And Blair, though she works at tasks in kitchen and school which may temporarily seem to subvert her identity as a lady, who traditionally had servants who performed the actual work, never leaves the conventional sphere of woman's work and, more importantly, never learns to look at her work as a potential for self-fulfillment or liberation from deference to male authority. When Jacquelin Gray has reestablished order at Red Rock, Blair gladly gives up her work and follows him to the "rosegarden" where he proposes to her.

The shared "ideal of the universal division between women and men" significantly shaped the "neutral territory" upon which romancers like Page developed their reconciliation plots. "For southerners," Fox-Genovese explains, "gender spheres interlocked with networks of families and households; men represented those families and households in the larger world of politics and warfare," and women "belonged within families and households under the governance and protection of their men" (195). The conflict-resolution in the conventional romance inevitably unites a man triumphant in his proper sphere of "politics and warfare" and a model of fragile womanhood clearly in need of governance and protection. The man may be a gentlemanly Yankee officer or, in a Reconstruction romance like Red Rock, a Southern gentleman who has reaffirmed his masculinity in the glorious unseating of carpetbaggers and scalawags. The Pageian belle, like Blair Cary, may even be able to transcend her ladylike fragility for a time and, in the absence of her man, work to preserve the common life of family and household her man is fighting for in the larger world, but upon his return she resigns herself to the rosegarden again. Though Blair may perform work that, in the eyes of Mammy Krenda at least, subverts her identity as a lady, she never transcends the meaning of woman's work. What Blair does has meaning as work only in its relation to the work her father, Steve Allen, and Jacquelin Gray perform in their struggle against Leech. Blair does her part, the woman's part, in the larger struggle for the restoration of the traditional order.

All of these relations are turned inside out by Glasgow. Dan Montjoy "gets" his belle, but by the time he returns from the war, his manhood has been weakened rather than affirmed in triumphant conquest. And Betty Ambler, in his absence, has very definitely transcended the sphere of woman's work, not only because she has taken over the roles of her father and of Harris as the ultimate authority over the cycles of

production and reproduction at Uplands, but because Betty has made her work her own. Dan, pausing at the gates of Uplands on his way to Chericoke, sees Betty's spirit in everything, in the ongoing restoration of the house and in the work in the fields. For Page there is never any question that the heroism of women is finally dependent on the heroism of strong men. Only in the conquest of a military foe or a usurping carpetbagger does the work of Page's ladies have significance. The reverse is true in the resolution of Glasgow's plot. Here it is Betty's work that restores meaning to Montjoy's manhood.

The reconciliation theme, traditionally employed to smooth over sectional differences, finds its way into The Battle Ground as reconciliation between genders. The old romantic South, embodied by Virginia Ambler, a Pageian heroine who might in his hands have found love in a brave Yankee officer, is dead; the paternalistic model of manhood, nearly sanctified in the singleminded and singlehearted devotion to Robert E. Lee - "Marse Robert" the ultimate gentleman - has declared its bankruptcy; out of the ashes, presumably as a New South Adam and Eve, emerge Dan Montjoy and Betty Ambler.

After the collapse of male power, the household has become what ante-bellum romancers, glossing over undesired realities, had always insisted it had been - a matriarchy. The sphere of woman's work has grown to encompass the whole. Yet however effectively Glasgow represents the collapse of gender conventions along with the loss of other determinants of antebellum plantation society and the norms of behavior they governed, her "reconciliation" is finally no less idealistic than the conventional one. In Dan Montjoy's return as "prodigal son," begging first the old Major's forgiveness as a sign that his impetuous pride has been humbled on the fields of war, and then finding consolation in Betty's "motherly" embrace, it can not be overlooked that Dan includes

Big Abel in his remorseful return to the Major's grace. It is Dan who turns Abel into a "prodigal son." And Abel, who has in reality no part in the emasculation Dan suffered, not only does not choose freedom but makes no choices at all. And though Betty has satisfactorily transcended the conventions of her place in the household, has willingly sacrificed her protected girlhood to find a far more powerful expression of self in work, it must not be overlooked that her expanded and no longer gender-determined sphere of authority still depends on the presence of others. Betty finds self-definition in an expanded sphere, but the specific work, the planting and harvesting, the repair of crumbling walls, the weeding and the restoration of the garden to order, is still performed by servants.

SIX: The Deliverance - "Love Is Best"

The Deliverance (1904) is the second volume in Glasgow's "Novels of the Commonwealth," the group of six historical novels, including The Battle-Ground (1902), The Voice of the People (1900), The Romance of a Plain Man (1909), Virginia (1913), and Life and Gabriella (1916), with which her chronicle of Virginia between the Civil War and World War I begins. Though Glasgow's best work came after 1920, with Barren Ground (1925), The Sheltered Life (1932), and In This Our Life (1941), for which she received a Pulitzer Prize in 1942, The Deliverance is undoubtedly the most noteworthy among her early books.

The novel, subtitled "A Romance of the Virginia Tobacco Fields," takes place during a period of twelve years after the end of Reconstruction, far enough removed, Glasgow felt, from "spectacular events or dramatic moments" in the recent past to provide an appropriate setting for what she later defined as her primary purpose in writing the story of the decline and regeneration of the Blake family: ". . . to interpret with fidelity . . . the prolonged effects of the social transition upon ordinary lives . . . lived by simple folk, alike in the defeated aristocracy and the intransigent democracy" (A Certain Measure 29). She had already portrayed the same period from the perspective of the "rising middle class" in The Voice of the People and concentrated in The Deliverance more directly on the "defeated aristocracy," particularly on the fate of a displaced Southern gentleman who must learn to come to terms with a past he knows

only through the recollections of older relatives. While the "simple folk," colorful yeoman tobacco farmers and black laborers, impart a realistic flavor to the framework for the novel's action - so much so in fact, as Glasgow later proudly recorded, that "many readers" had found the book's pages "drenched with the smell of tobacco" (A Certain Measure 32) - the central plot interest is made up of familiar "romance" material. As in Thomas Nelson Page's post-war epic, Red Rock, dramatic tension in The Deliverance is supplied by the struggle between a fallen planter family and their opportunistic former overseer, or, as Cable expresses it in John March, Southerner, by the war between "decency in the wrong and vulgarity in the right" (JMS 62).

For two hundred years, successive generations of Blakes, "accounted people of great wealth and wastefulness," had owned a two-thousand acre estate worked by some three-hundred slaves (D 411). The last owner, Christopher Blake's father, had, like the elder Jacquelin Gray, "grown very careless in the confidence he placed" and entrusted all of his business interests to his overseer, Bill Fletcher, a man who is, much like Hiram Still, gifted with the practical business sense his employer lacks and motivated primarily by the desire to elevate his own male offspring to the ranks of gentlemen (D 410). In the economic and political upheaval three years after the end of the Civil War, Mr. Blake had first lost his sanity and then his fortune. Like Hiram Still in Red Rock, Bill Fletcher had mysteriously amassed a sizeable fortune during the war. When the Blake estate goes up for sale, Fletcher suddenly appears with ready cash in hand and buys the entire plantation for the "absurd sum of seven thousand dollars" (D 410).

At that time, approximately a decade before the beginning of the novel's action, Christopher Blake had been a mere boy of ten. Instead of growing up to take his father's place as a leisured gentleman planter, dividing his time between casually attending to the business of tobacco growing and harvesting and secluding himself in his

study, to read Horace and to complete his father's "laborious translation of the 'Illiad'," young Christopher, together with his blind mother, his two sisters, Lila and Cynthia, and Mrs. Blake's invalid brother, Tucker Corbin, must move down the road into the house Bill Fletcher had occupied before the war (D 202). Assisted only by Cynthia and two aged house-servants, who are too loyal to have abandoned their former mistress after emancipation, Christopher at an early age assumes the burden of providing a living for his family, planting tobacco on the seventy acres that remain the family's property and occasionally even hiring himself out to Bill Fletcher. The future Dan Montjoy envisioned for himself at Appomattox amidst the ruins of the Confederacy has become reality for Christopher Blake: "brutal necessity" has eclipsed gentlemanly autonomy. Blake's character is shaped by a life of hard physical labor endured with "a terrible patience [grown] into a second nature" (BG 493).

At the novel's beginning, Christopher Blake is a spiritually and intellectually stunted and dulled young man, who has spent his formative years engaged in daily labor, barely sufficient to secure the means of survival for himself and his family. Hard work has affected him in the way that the hardships of war have affected Dan Montjoy. When Blake is first seen in the novel, Glasgow's narrator describes him as "only one among the daily toilers in the field, moulded physically perhaps in a finer shape than they" but otherwise indistinguishable from the other field hands who plant Bill Fletcher's tobacco (D 12). And as Montjoy is stripped of his foppish, "civilized" self during the war to be rewarded with a regenerative strength grounded in sympathetic accord with his natural surroundings, so Christopher Blake's displacement eventually proves itself a fortunate fall. Through his daily, albeit involuntary, intimacy with his fields and tobacco plants, Blake has recovered a sense of "communion with that earth which had moulded both him and his race" but which his fathers had gradually allowed to become

attentuated, "thin and pale," degenerated through "sentimental decay" (A Certain Measure 28; 33). In sharp contrast with the dandyish Montjoy of the first half of The Battle-Ground, Christopher Blake is a kind of throwback, a "young savage," "as much the product of the soil upon which he stood as [was] the great white chestnut growing beside the road" (D 12). But if Montjoy's education leads him from an excess of artificiality toward a sympathetic oneness with nature, discovered on the battlefields of the Civil War and paid for with the loss of his physical vitality, Christopher Blake's education leads in the opposite direction, toward a regeneration or re-civilization of the "savage" self uncovered beneath the crust of civilized manners and habits by the effects of prolonged drudgery. This recivilization is symbolized at the conclusion of the novel by Blake's recovery of his hereditary place as owner of the plantation.

Initially, both Montjoy and Blake are incomplete models of gentlemanliness, in the way Captain Porgy is incomplete without Sergeant Millhouse or Millhouse without Porgy; each lacks what the other possesses in excess. Physically, Blake resembles the "antique ideal" of manhood, because of his great strength and his ability to endure extremes of hardship, but he lacks the emotional maturity, the control, and, above all, the equanimity, alike to misfortune and success, that has traditionally been the mark of a Southern gentleman (D 12).

The first half of the novel is dominated by the presence of the matriarchal Mrs. Blake, who sits enthroned in the front parlor of the overseer's house, surrounded by portraits of Blakes and Corbins and thankful for her blindness, because it allows her to "view the past more clearly" (D 70). Mrs. Blake is a forerunner of Faulkner's Rosa Coldfield and a successor to Cable's Daphne Dalrymple March. In her Glasgow personified "the lost illusions of the Southern heart" (D 35). After the sale of Blake Hall to Fletcher, her children had decided that her frail nature could not withstand the shock

of truth, and so, for the duration of their exile, they have spun a tapestry of lies around the old woman, spending much of their scant income to supply her with delicacies she had been accustomed to and much of their energy on the invention of imaginative fictions to delude her into believing that she still presides over a household of numerous servants at Blake Hall. In her mind, all is well with the world; the Yankee invaders have been turned back and the Confederacy of Southern states has been governed for two decades by a succession of gentlemanly presidents in Richmond (D 74).

In his mother's presence, Blake must conceal his coarsened appearance, invent excuses for his apparent indifference to the charms of attractive belles within the extended network of Blake cousins, and pretend to be the carefree young gentleman he might have been. The disjunction between the illusion of uninterrupted affluence and the reality, in which Blake daily performs labor that is as invisible to his mother as the slaves' labor had been before the war, generates in Blake not only hatred for the man in whom he sees the cause of his degradation but also resentment against himself. Blake does find a degree of refuge from the strain of sustaining his mother's illusions when he is at work, but in his tobacco fields Blake Hall is still constantly before him and continues to fuel what his been his sole passion since early boyhood: to be revenged on Bill Fletcher for the humiliation of his and his family's honor.

Blake at last sees an opportunity to satisfy his hatred, when he accidentally discovers his enemy's one weak spot - Bill Fletcher has idolized his grandson, who bears his name, as Christopher Blake does his father's, and through whom Bill Fletcher is determined to "make his mark among the quality" (D 37). Blake decides that destroying Fletcher's ambition for the future would constitute a just revenge for the loss of his own and, taking advantage of the adolescent admiration young Will has for Blake's reckless daring and the insolence with which he stands up to old Fletcher, he

turns the boy against his grandfather. Young Will abandons his education to spend his time hunting and drinking with Blake instead. At last, after Will has defied his grandfather's ambition by marrying the daughter of a poor tobacco farmer, the old man disinherits him. Will fulfills his role as the instrument of Blake's thirst for revenge and does what Blake had often dreamed of doing himself; in a fit of anger over the old man's stubbornness, Will murders him.

Upon this drama of passionate hatred and revenge, Glasgow grafts a counter-passion, a force that ultimately redeems Blake and turns his brutal power from destructiveness into a potential for good. If the first half of the novel is dominated by Blake's inability to reconcile himself to his displacement from the past, by the stifling presence of Mrs. Blake's dreamworld and the bitterness of Blake's sister Cynthia, who, because she is older than Blake, remembers the time before the war more clearly, during the second half Blake comes more and more under the influence of Maria Fletcher and their love for each other, which finally triumphs over the class barriers and the artificially sustained hatred that divide them. Maria plays the role in Christopher Blake's life that Betty Ambler does in Dan Montjoy's. Through her love Blake learns to overcome his inherited family pride and to confront reality as a whole and independent being.

By the conclusion of The Battle-Ground, Dan has come into his own as "just himself," neither the flattering Lightfoot nor the rude Montjoy; Blake similarly discovers a sense of his natural self, neither the leisured aristocrat nor the brutish toiler in the fields. At the end of The Deliverance, he has transcended the class engendered limitations that had restrained him before. Glasgow foreshadows the ultimate resolution of Blake's conflicting passions - his hatred for Fletcher and his growing love for Fletcher's granddaughter - in an episode that involves Blake's twin sister Lila. Unlike Christopher and Cynthia, Lila has been kept free from the burden of work and has thus

escaped the physical coarsening the others have undergone. Her beauty has attracted the humble but ardent affections of Jim Weatherby, a veritable model of the industrious, altogether pleasant, and cheerful yeoman farmer. When the two young lovers approach Blake for his blessing, he decides to grant it, for the first time placing personal happiness above family pride.

As a variation of the standard reconciliation motif, the union between the plantation belle and the representative of the rising middle class is not entirely convincing because the marriage does nothing to obliterate the class divisions between the Blakes and the Weatherbys. On the contrary, Lila's and Jim's marriage only reaffirms their existence. Despite their impoverishment, Blake and Cynthia had agreed to grant Lila a privileged status: "She was the particular pride of the family - the one luxury they allowed themselves besides their costly mother" (D 76); among the Weatherbys, she remains the same, a decorative article, an acquisition that perhaps signals a coming up in the world for the humble tobacco farmers as it had served to remind the Blakes of their past gentility. The prospering yeomen Jim Weatherby and Bill Fletcher, both symbols of the social transformation in the South Glasgow had witnessed during her youth in the 1870's and 1880's, are ultimately hardly less free of the "lost illusions of the Southern heart" than Mrs. Blake is.

The union which the romance of Lila and Jim foreshadows, represents a reconciliation on a far more comprehensive scale. When Blake accepts Maria's love and his own love for her despite her hated surname, class lines are crossed both ways and thereby symbolically obliterated, since, in terms of the new hierarchy in Glasgow's microcosmic version of Southern society, Maria is as far above Blake as he has believed himself to be above her. Blake must accept not only the past but, more importantly, the past that is still in the present. This he is ready to do on the night of Bill Fletcher's

death, when Will appears at his door, frightened and desperate for help. Blake sends the boy away to the North and stands trial for the murder himself. Imprisoned and thereby deprived of all contact with his natural environment, Blake nearly dies, but he is miraculously saved after word of Will's confession reaches Virginia. Blake comes home, physically weakened and spiritually wounded, much like Montjoy at the end of the war, but he quickly recovers his strength under his native land's healing sun, which also shines upon Maria who waits for him with her love and Blake Hall as her dowry.

All evil is erased, all wrong is righted, everyone has been restored to his or her proper place, and even Will Fletcher escapes the possibility of having to account for his guilt, since he is by that time in England. "Decency" and "right" conquer all around, much as they do in scores of reconciliation novels designed to heal wounds rather than expose the sores that still marred the recovering South's progress toward the American dream of prosperity through a revitalized work ethic. Love triumphs over the forces of history, the typical "message" of post-Reconstruction romances, celebrating the adjustment of Southern "gauges" to the Northern standard. In place of the formulaic regional reunification, Glasgow designs an innovative enough reconciliation between classes, but the traditional anti-hero, the materialistic self-made man of the Still/Fletcher type, is still defeated and Glasgow's new Southern lovers meet on a neutral territory between the fallen aristocracy and a middle class that has risen to a higher level. With at least part of its divided plot, The Deliverance enrolls itself in the popular fiction of uplift Glasgow reputedly despised.

Yet despite numerous similarities in plotting and setting, it would be grossly misleading to lump The Deliverance and Page's Red Rock together into the category of escapist fiction. The Deliverance is completely free of the polemics that characterize Red Rock's "rhetorical mode." There are no moralizing authorial intrusions to remind us that

what we are reading is not fiction at all but history encoded in the palatable form of a fictional chronicle. Glasgow's novel, though it does encode the "period of transition" in a similar plot situation to that of Red Rock, does not raise any claim to historical objectivity or representativeness. In Glasgow's novel, historical processes form a significant context; they are not, however, the primary objects of interpretation. The Deliverance is, as its staunchest defenders and most perceptive critcs have insisted, not a "novel of sociology" but a "novel of psychology" (Raper 195). Unlike Page's types, Glasgow's characters are "alive at the same time that they are social symbols" (McDowell 90).

Glasgow evokes the familiar landscape of the plantation novel. Blake Hall stands at the center, "a surety of light and air - produced in part by the clean white Doric columns of the portico and in part by the ample slope of shaven lawn studded with beds of brightly blooming flowers" (D 15). But the great house has become a shell, alienated from the tradition it represents by Fletcher's furnishings. "What remained was but the outer husk, the disfigured frame, upon which the newer imprint seemed only a passing insult" (D 16). The other half of the place has been moved to the new home of the Blakes, the gallery of ancestors and most importantly the living memories of former splendor. The landscape surrounding this polarized representation of the shape and the substance of tradition is also familiar and at the same time estranged. Cultivated fields are surrounded by the forest, encompassing the plantation horizon that has been internalized by Blake as it had been by Gordon Keith. "Around [Blake] the landscape swept like an emerald sea, over which the small shadows rippled in passing waves, beginning at the rail fence skirting the red clay road and breaking at last upon the darker green of the far-off pines" (D 127). But while this landscape has traditionally represented an absence of work, Glasgow has turned it into the opposite. None of the

action, realistic or romantic, ever takes place far from the context of work. Work and workers, not the sounds of labor or the products of work alone, constitute the reality in which all major characters move, Mrs. Blake being the only exception. Gordon Keith finds the reality of work after he has been exiled from the Edenic Elphinstone of his childhood; Christopher Blake has merely discovered the reality that has always been a part of the garden.

The identity of all characters who populate the pages of this textual landscape is always directly or indirectly bound up with a sense of the place. The question of whether the self is inextricably bound to the plantation past or if it is possible to escape the past and forge an independent selfhood underlies much of the action. Most of the former members of the plantation household are unable to do more than "drift aimlessly on the widening current of the times," either clinging to the lost past or vainly pursuing the future (D 59). One exception is Maria Blake; another is a character who never directly participates in the plot action at all, whose presence is so marginalized by the central revenge/love plot that it is scarcely visible.

Early in the novel, the reader is given a brief glimpse of a story in which the main characters are Isam, the Blake's former coachman, and his appropriately named wife Eve. Isam is a comic character in the Pageian tradition of the freedman who suffers as much as his former masters do from their displacement within the stable social order in the old plantation South and who longs for nothing more than to be allowed to return to the good old days. Having sought out his white family in their new home, because he needed to find out his exact age from the birth register of all Blake slaves, Isam complains: "Times dey's done change, but I ain't - I'se des de same. Dat's de tribble wid dis yer worl'; w'en hit changes yo' fortune hit don' tink ter changin' yo skin es well" (D 59). Isam's belief that he had been much better off in the old days, when

mistress provided "bitters" to cure every ailment and choosing a wife meant simply "totin' all yo' belongin's f'om one cabin ter anurr," shows how deeply he has internalized the social structures of the past (D 61). Isam has equated his former bondage with his race - emancipation is meaningless as long as the deeper bondage to blackness remains. The greater part of Isam's troubles is his wife's notion that the abolition of slavery has invalidated their marriage. Though they had "done 'sperunce mah'age gwine on fifty years," Eve insists on an exchange of wedding vows in a chruch ceremony (D 61). Isam agrees, albeit reluctantly, but then Eve takes her desire to affirm her liberation one step further. When the preacher reminds her "dat Eve 'uz in subjection ter her husban'," the biblical Eve's descendant declares "she warn' gwine be subjected unner no man," packs up her belongings, and leaves (D 62).

The Deliverance, however, is not the story of Isam, who can not put his plantation past behind him, and Eve, who does at least seek to create her own life and identity, wholly new and wholly her own. Instead, it is the story of Christopher Blake and Maria Fletcher, the white son of Isam's old master and the white woman whose love he accepts, after a long process of self-discovery, precisely because she is completely herself and completely new. Despite the similarities between the two stories, they are separated by two overwhelming differences. The obvious one, and which is the most important in terms of Southern literary history, is that the story of Christopher and Maria is told and the other is not. Secondly, there is a difference in the way each story ends. Maria, like Eve, has left her home on the Blake plantation, suffered through an unhappy marriage abroad, lost her husband, and then returned to find happiness after all back where she had begun her journey. Eve, too, after a period of wandering and working on her own, returns to the cabin she shared with Isam. But Eve comes home only to witness the deaths of her children and finally to die herself. It seems reasonable to

assume that Ellen Glasgow recognized the potential for a vital truth that could be told about the post-Reconstruction South seen through the eyes of Isam and Eve. It is pointless to speculate about her reasons for not telling that story. And perhaps we should, as Julius Rowan Raper suggests, be grateful she got as far as she did in 1904 (Without Shelter 199).

Thomas Nelson Page portrayed the social transition in the South during and after Reconstruction as a conflict between "decent," moral, and highly cultured aristocrats and "vulgar," immoral elements determined to overthrow the "natural" order of Southern society. George Washington Cable took a first step to challenge the position of class and race as determinants for "decency" and "vulgarity," as well as moral "right" and "wrong." Ellen Glasgow, too, approaches late nineteenth century Southern social history in terms of this dichotomy; she calls it "the tragic conflict of types" (A Certain Measure 12). For Glasgow, both halves of the New South's divided mind were equally incapable of creating the conditions under which a truly civilized society could be constructed. Fletcher's materialism is no more and no less "vulgar" than Mrs. Blake's escapism. If Fletcher's presence vulgarizes Blake Hall, Mrs. Blake's vapid idealism turns the overseer's house into tragi-comical farce.

As a plantation overseer, Bill Fletcher is the literary descendant of the only figure in the plantation legend who was never wholly assimilated into the organic myth. Risen to power and wealth from obscurity, self-reliant, realistic, practical, and cunning, Bill Fletcher has become an exemplary product of the New South creed. Though he virtually personifies a denial of the aristocratic belief in hereditary determinism, Fletcher nevertheless retains the social bias that had confined him and his kind in the past. For Fletcher, life is balance sheet, in which hard work is rewarded in cash, which in turn generates its own morality (D 38).

If indeed a part of the heralded New South had, as Grady proudly announced in New York, emerged from its benighted past and rejoined the mainstream American destiny in the Gilded Age, another part of the South, perhaps the greater one, lived during the 1880's and 1890's much in the way it had before the war. The once aristocratic Blakes thus suffer, in a sense, a dual loss - the humiliation of defeat and life in the abject poverty that, according to the apostles of progress, no longer existed in the South. Unable to reconcile their past and their present circumstances, the Blakes "exult [their past] into an idol of sacrifice," denying their loss of status and nourishing "smouldering antagonisms under the surface of life" (A Certain Measure 35-6). In other words, the Fletchers live under the illusion that the past is dead; the Blakes, under the equally paralyzing conviction that it is not even past.

Thomas Nelson Page, following a longstanding tradition in Southern plantation literature, produces an "objective" Yankee observer in Red Rock, Mr. Welch, through whose perspective the plantation setting reveals itself as a true harbor of timeless grace and contentment. Ellen Glasgow also introduces her readers to the setting of The Deliverance through the eyes of a visitor who has no direct personal interest in the lives of the novel's central characters. Guy Carraway, a city lawyer, had on occasion in the past assisted Bill Fletcher in legal matters, but only after Fletcher had already become the master of Blake Hall. Carraway's point-of-view is decidedly romantic and informed by an "old-fashioned loyalty to a strong class prejudice" (D 27). In fact, Carraway is himself something of a displaced gentleman; at least, he finds it distasteful to make a living by working for the likes of Fletcher. Summoned from the city to serve as Fletcher's emissary in negotiations with Christopher Blake - Fletcher wants to buy the last seventy acres of the old Blake estate that still remain in the hands of the family - Carraway approaches the old Hall in the sentimental luminescence of the "approaching

twilight." In the "fading after-glow," the splendid architecture of the mansion strikes him as a living symbol of the South's great past (D 15). To Carraway's "imaginative mind" the building speaks of "that inner spirit which had moulded it into a lasting expression of a racial sentiment . . . a manifestation in brick and mortar of the hereditary greatness of the Blakes" (D 15). That greatness is desecrated by the presence of Fletcher, the upstart. Matching his conception of the magnificent tradition embodied in Blake Hall and Carraway has created an image of Fletcher as a traitorous villain, a diabolical swindler, fully the equal of a Hiram Still or Jonadab Leech. Over the eight years since Carraway had last seen his client face to face, Fletcher's "crime" had steadily increased in magnitude: "The old betrayal of his employer's dependence, which at first had been merely a suspicion in the lawyer's mind, had begun gradually, as time went on, to bristle with sigificant detail" (D 23). Although, and probably also because Carraway has no certain knowledge of the circumstances under which Fletcher first gained possession of the Blake estate, his "suspicions" have grown into convictions and, finally, into certitude: "There had been about his act all the damning hypocrisy of a great theft - all the air of stern morality which makes for the popular triumph of the heroic swindler" (D 23).

The reality is different. The Fletcher whom Carraway meets inside the Hall is no heroic villain. In fact, Fletcher's only "crime" is his vulgarity, his showy pride, and his gross materialism. Most of the country people Carraway encounters in the area around the plantation, and of course Christopher Blake, have condemned Bill Fletcher under the conviction that he could not have obtained the money to purchase the estate by honest means; but only Bill Fletcher himself knows the entire truth. No "stolen bond" suddenly resurfaces; Glasgow provides no concrete evidence at all to settle the question of Fletcher's guilt or innocence unambiguously.

But what disturbs Carraway possibly even more than his employer's crudeness, the complete absence of heroic villainy in his character, is that Fletcher's granddaughter, Maria, has lost all traces of "vulgarity" that should, according to Carraway's expectations, betray her as a member of an inferior class. "She was artificial, Carraway told himself with emphasis, and yet the distinction of manner - the elegance - was certainly the point at which her training had not failed" (D 26). The privilege of education that Fletcher's money, ill-gotten or not, bought has enabled Maria to become virtually indistinguishable from a Lila Blake or a Blair Cary. Carraway, who has imbibed along with his romantic image of the old South a strong sense of aristocratic hereditary determinism, resents this conversion of the overseer's offspring into a lady: "Bill Fletcher's granddaughter had, he felt, no right to this rare security of breeding which revealed itself in every fold of the dress she wore" (D 27). Without Fletcher's money, Carraway reminds himself reassuringly, Maria might have been "but one of the sallow, over-driven drudges who stare like helpless effigies from the little tumbled-down cabins along country roadsides" (D 27).

What Maria might have been, but for the advantages of training and wealth, Carraway finds, members of the great Blakes have become once they have lost the privilege of position and fortune. If Fletcher's vulgarity degrades the magnificence of Blake Hall, some of the Blakes now living in his former house are quickly vulgarized by their change of circumstances. Carraway can still perceive a difference between Maria Fletcher's "artificial" bearing and Cynthia Blake's "ease of manner" that is, in Carraway's mind, the product of heredity, but he must admit to himself that Cynthia could easily be mistaken for "the sister to the toilworn slattern he had noticed in one of the hovels across the country" (D 75). In Christopher Blake, finally, Carraway meets Maria's exact opposite. Where Maria has acquired a veneer of civilization and has

slipped easily into the role of "lady", Blake has lost all civilized forms and become a "sullen young savage" instead of a gentleman (D 80).

Carraway quickly develops a fascination for the two young members of these rivalling families. Maria in particular engages his interest, and after closer observation he is finally forced to recognize that individuals are more than the products of heredity. His complacent conviction that "blood will tell" (D 12) is dismantled as an illusion when he is faced with the reality that thirty years of reversed social circumstances have largely obliterated differences in blood between the two families. "In the end," Carraway must conclude, Maria, too, "was probably but plastic matter for the mark of circumstance" (D 180).

The setting in which Carraway first sees Blake is again filtered through the distorting "twilight" of romance that could have been taken from almost any conventional idealizing plantation fiction. As he passes through the lush green fields surrounding Blake Hall, Carraway sees in the distance "the moving figures of the labourers transplanting the young crop" (D 12). Among them the figure of Blake arrests his attention especially, because he is visibly more powerful and physically impressive than the others. It is characteristic of Carraway's romanticizing perception to lose sight entirely of the context of work in which young Christopher Blake here appears. "[L]imned in the lawyer's mental vision against a century of the brilliant if tragic history of his race," Blake becomes instead a symbol of an organic communion that exists between the gentleman planter and his soil (D 12). "In his pose, in his walk, in the careless carriage of his head," Carraway notes, "there was something of the large freedom of the elements" (D 12). Perceived from the distance, Blake appears to have been moulded into "the antique ideal" of his race, but seen up close, Blake's face shocks

Carraway with its suggestion of brutality that is "almost repelling in its massive power" (D 13).

Southern conventions of masculinity, especially those pertaining to the class of slaveholding gentlemen during the nineteenth century, had "never abandoned the element of force or even brutality that northern conventions were submerging in the rational self-discipline appropriate to a commercial society" (Fox-Genovese 200). "Whatever their paeans to freedom from demeaning labor as the hallmark of the gentleman," Fox-Genovese explains, "the men knew that the exigencies of mastering that unfree labor force required a heavy dose of violence not far below the civilized surface" (199). Violence and brutality, channeled to be sure into socially conventionalized habits of heavy drinking, duelling, hunting, etc., were thus a part of the "antique ideal," a part of the gentleman's character according to the ideal that in Blake, the slaveless heir, has transcended the tenuous civilized restraint which the ideal had allowed.

In Blake, moreover, we can trace further evidence of the pattern that links literary portraits of Southern gentlemen far into the twentieth century from Faulkner's Quentin Compson to Walker Percy's Will Barrett. The potential for violence, integral to the slaveholding gentleman's character, has "been deflected and turned inward" over the years (Percy, The Last Gentleman 16). In Christopher Blake there is more than a suggestion of Will Barrett, whose ancestry Percy traces back to a great grandfather belonging to Blake's generation. While Blake is often portrayed, and not exclusively through Carraway's romantic imagination, at one with the "large freedom of natural things," that freedom stands in constant opposition to the necessity which compells his labor in the fields (D 125). Thus Blake is constantly and paradoxically drawn to his fields and at the same time repulsed by them. Blake is the best tobacco grower in the county, but nothing repels him more strongly than the smell of tobacco. While Blake

frequently escapes the shabby gentility maintained by his sister at home to find refuge in his fields, the peace of mind he recovers when he is among his crops more often than not turns into violence associated with the performance of his work. After his harvest, for instance, Blake stands among the rows of cut tobacco plants like an ancient warrior on a battlefield: "At his feet were little green piles of tobacco, and around him from the sunbaked earth rose a headless army of bruised and bleeding stubble" (D 181).

In part, Blake's bewilderment is of course the result of his having been born a gentleman's son at a time when the civilization created by and for gentlemen was already defunct. One of Blake's most painful memories is of a night near the beginning of the Civil War, when his father appeared at his bedside to beg his "forgiveness for the selfishness of his long life." Blake recalls his father, "a white-haired man, whose mind was fast decaying," breaking down and crying: "You came too late, my son, you came twenty years too late" (D 93). Like Will Barrett and many other "last gentlemen" in twentieth century Southern fiction, Blake is frequently haunted by memories of a father whose inadequacy stands in sharp contrast to the function such "guiding" fathers as Gordon Keith's fulfill in the Pageian and earlier neo-plantation tradition.

Blake's ironic tragedy is that he belongs spiritually to a race that idealized leisure as a sign of moral and social superiority, while his daily life of toil in the fields drives him deeper and deeper into an abyss he can not escape. That abyss is the offspring of the Tidewater aristocracy's mores, which Glasgow rejected even though she was never able entirely to absorb her attraction to the "imperishable charm" of the life led by her ancestors (A Certain Measure 12). Stanley Elkins has described the reality behind the antebellum legend and its romanticized image of race relationships on the plantation in terms of a syllogism, "the precision of whose terms paralleled the precision of the system itself." It goes as follows: "All slaves are black; slaves are degraded and

contemptible; therefore all blacks are degraded and contemptible and should be kept in a state of slavery" (61). Since "blackness" and "work" had a similar and in many ways overlapping status in the legend, one may derive another syllogism to describe the paradox Christopher Blake endures because he occupies, as it were, both sides of the legend, the romantic illusion and the reality, at once. In her dying words, Mrs. Blake reminds her son to be a gentleman always, and being a gentleman "embraces all morality and a good deal of religion" (D 479). And morality, according to Bolivar Blake, the family's legendary great-grandfather, embraces a total concept of being, including one's conduct in all aspects of life, as also, for instance, in one's "table manners." Thus all true gentlemen are entirely moral. Secondly, all gentlemen, by virtue of their superior moral status, are free from the need to acquire social status through work. It follows then that all moral men are free from the need to work and, as a correlary, that all those who work are therefore immoral. It is this kind of logic that condemned Fletcher, as a member of the working class, in Carraway's mind a priori. And it is this logic which leads Christopher Blake to regard the physical marks of his labor, the bright green stain left by "the blood of the tobacco worm," as a stain of immorality on his soul which even "all the water in the river Jordan" could not wash away. (D 182).

Christopher Blake then lives in constant communion with the abyss, but Glasgow's vision is not at all the tragic vision of later Southerners. Blake is redeemed from the depth into which he has descended. The agency of that redemption is love; and its agent is Maria Fletcher, a woman who embodies not only the aspirations of the South's middle class but also what for Glasgow constituted a model of truly civilized being. Blake, who has lost entirely the veneer of social conventions and returned to "a savage state of nature," and Maria, who has learned to understand and to despise the

"artificial state of human civilization," meet on a kind of middle ground, an imaginative space where both can "be themselves" (Raper, From the Sunken Garden 6).

Even at the beginning of the novel, one character, who is also there at the end waiting together with Maria for Blake's return from prison, already occupies that neutral ground, which may perhaps best be described as a physical and psychological space where true happiness is possible. Tucker Corbin is the only truly happy and genuinely admirable character in the novel. Jim Weatherby is also content, but he still embodies class and race prejudices Corbin has moved beyond. Tucker Corbin has enjoyed the best of life in the Old South and then suffered through the abyss during the Civil War. "From a proud position as the straightest shot and the gayest liver of his day, he had been reduced at a single blow to the couch of a hopeless cripple" (D 57). But he had emerged from that experience neither resentful nor bitter but accepting and tranquil. Tucker Corbin has absorbed his loss and come into his spiritual heritage through defeat. He spends his time watching nature. His long discourses on nests of wrens and clouds in the shape of eagles may become trying at times, but Tucker already exemplifies the refined dignity that also characterizes Glasgow's other genuinely civilized souls like David Archbald in The Sheltered Life (D 106-7). Above all, Tucker has the "heart in the intellect," feeling controlled by reason, which for Glasgow constituted a truly civilized character and which Blake lacks completely (Rouse, "Glasgow's Civilized Men" 136). Tucker has moved through defeat into an acceptance of the past, which neither Cynthia nor Blake has done, and a calm indifference to all but his natural surroundings. "Nothing was so terrible but Tucker could get a laugh out of it, people said - not knowing that since he had learned to smile at his own ghastly failure it was an easy matter to turn the jest on universal joy or woe" (D 57).

What makes Tucker Corbin admirable and civilized is his detachment from the world. He is not a model of manhood, an exemplary Southern gentleman, nor does his character contain thhe outline of a solution to the South's social problems; he is simply another aristocrat whose cool detachment is an ideal, without partaking of the evasiveness and self-delusion of the idealism embodied by his sister. The words "careless" and "indifferent," which Glasgow uses most frequently to describe Christopher Blake and his ancestors from his father to the legendary Bolivar Blake, represent the negative extreme of the quality that makes Tucker Corbin civilized .

Tucker Corbin, however, has paid a terrible price for his civilized soul. Though he is emotionally and spiritually whole, he is physically only half a man. Joan Foster Santas, drawing on William R. Taylor's descriptive classification of Southern gentlemen types evolved in the literary plantation legend, describes Corbin as a "Southern Hothead" who has turned into a "Southern Hamlet" (69). This is true only at the most superficial level. Both the "Hothead" and the "Hamlet" type, as antebellum romancers from Kennedy and Tucker to postwar romancers like Page and Cooke employed them, were cautionary figures, deviations from the ideal. The typical "Hothead" is a man of excessive pride and aggressiveness, an aristocrat who lacks the detachment, indifference, careless freedom from compulsive behavior the code valued. The "Hamlet" is his opposite. The typical "Hamlet" is "introverted" to extremes and overly "given to brooding" (Taylor 138). A "Hamlet" is thus excessively detached, indifferent and careless. If Tucker Corbin was in his youth indeed a "Hothead" - though there is not nearly enough evidence in the novel to decide that question conclusively - he has become no "Southern Hamlet" in his later years. The "Hamlet's" characteristic role as observer or listener rather than participant is the result of a psychological, not a physical loss of power.

Corbin has arrived at a state of being in which he can be said to embody the gentleman ideal as a Wirt or a Kennedy and even a Byrd would have understood it. He possesses the traditionally valued advantages of class, character, and a measure of cultivation which the Southern ideal had in common with the gentleman ideal in England and elsewhere. In addition to these accomplishments of the stereotypical Cavalier, Corbin also possesses the natural simplicity eighteenth-century Southerners had come to regard as highly desirable. But, as Lyn Rainard has reminded us, the gentleman conceived as an ideal model of masculinity, was "above all else . . . a complete man, a man exemplifying all the values and aspirations of a society" (301). And Corbin is hardly a complete man. He can not serve as a role model for Blake. He is after all a tragic figure, a "civilized man in a world that is not civilized" (Rouse, Letters 203-4).

Tucker Corbin is finally not a model for the future but a model of and for the past. His acceptance and transcendence of "failure" and defeat is an example for the survivors of the Old South and particularly for those who remain its spiritual heirs and are content to relive the past indefinitely. But like the Old South itself, the physically disabled Corbin has no place in the new age. He is not "a dream figure of the future" as Santas claims (69) but the embodiment of the real past, according to Glasgow's vision, a past that "has been" (A Certain Measure 39). For the Southern male, as Glasgow had already suggested in The Battle-Ground, the Civil War had been sexual suicide.

If Corbin represents the antique ideal in all but his body, he is the opposite to Blake, who embodies it in his physical superiority alone. To become more like Tucker Corbin but without his sacrifice of masculinity is the task that faces Christopher Blake. The concept that such perfection of character can be achieved as the result of suffering trials shows how deeply Victorian Glasgow's world view was and how alien from "the postmodern sensibility with its stress on the immediate, the physical, and the expressive

as well as its return to the pre-Victorian infatuation with pure feeling conceptualized as identical to virtue" (Baym 36).

Like many Southerners of the post-war generation, Blake has found in his degraded status a source of pride. Thomas Nelson Page and George Washington Cable, though from directly opposite ideological perspectives, had already begun to see the gentleman's defeat in the Civil War as a *felix culpa*, a fortunate fall enabling a regeneration and revitalization of the gentleman ideal. But in Christopher Blake exists "a perverse and defiant pride, . . . a sense of distinction, of superiority, stemming from [his] inferior status" (Hobson 12, emphasis his). Early in his youth, Blake had attempted to educate himself, to study Latin and Greek and thus to retain a sense of gentlemanliness despite his poverty, but after he few years he had given up the effort. "In the end he had grown to feel a certain pride in the ignorance he had formerly despised - a clownish scorn of anything above the rustic details of his daily life" (D 203). It is Blake, not Tucker Corbin, who becomes a "Southern Hamlet."

Blake's suffering, the daily toil, and the stifling poverty he endures for the sake his family, are not expressions of loyalty or of noble self-sacrifice. His endurance is much like the fits of heroism he is capable of from time to time, as, for example, when he saves young Will Fletcher's life by stopping a team of runaway horses (D 163) or when he leaves his planting to help Isam and his sick family (D 447). Uninformed by what Corbin calls "the moral elements of true courage," Blake's daring is pure physical instinct (D 447). His sense of masculinity is beleaguered by his status as a worker on the same social level with blacks and poor whites, and so Blake misses no opportunity to demonstrate his remaining superiority through rude treatment of those whom he considers inferior and through an "old love of a risk for the sake of the risk" he shares with his forefathers (D 447). Blake answers Isam's desperate call for help, when his

children are dying and he himself lacks the strength even to bury them, not because he feels a sense of obligation, rooted in the past when Isam was a member of the Blake "family black and white;" neither does Isam's despair elicit Blake's simple human sympathy. Isam's call appeals directly to Blake's pride. Not to go would mean to have been cowardly, to have avoided the danger of infection instead of braving and challenging it.

Blake knows well enough that his decision to come to Isam's rescue is not heroic, that it is in fact the very opposite of heroism, since he goes not despite but because of the danger he will thereby be exposed to. As a true Southern gentleman, who is always at his best in adversity, Blake seems deliberately to seek disaster. Jim Weatherby is struck dumb when Blake announces his decision to go to Isam's cabin. And then Jim realizes that Blake appears to be actually happier than he has seen him in months as he walks into the woods (D 448).

From his ancestors, Blake has inherited not only his great physical strength but also "the curse of apathy - the hereditary instinct to let the single throw decide the issue" (D 203). Through generations of careless, reckless, dissipated living, the male Blakes had gradually been seized by a "fatal apathy . . . when events demanded strenuous endeavor" (D 224). This apathy, "like disease," threatened to strap the "courage from the descendent's veins" (D 203).

The only thing standing between Blake and that "inertia he himself had felt - of the impulse to drift with the tide, let it carry one where it would" is his passionate hatred of Fletcher, the man who stands literally between Blake and his patrimony (D 224). Thus Blake has found what his ancestors had gradually lost, the capacity to feel passion, the singleminded purpose that gives meaning to the totality of his existence. That passion has been generated by Blake's loss, his belatedness, his displacement from the past.

And thus he, too, eventually comes into his spiritual heritage through defeat. But the past, in order to be accepted, must first be transcended.

Blake sets out to destroy Fletcher when Carraway tells him that the old man's weak spot is his grandson Will. For four years, Blake systematically enslaves the boy, making him the instrument of his revenge. But the more he succeeds in carrying out his design, the more the boy becomes his slave and begins to hate the grandfather, the more Blake falls victim to the family apathy, the more difficult does he find it to nurture his hatred. At last, long after Blake has lost all interest in continuing to pursue his revenge deliberately and when his "indifference to success or failure pervaded him like a physical lethargy" (D 281), Will reverts completely on his own to "the family type" and becomes a shiftless, dejected, poor dirt farmer, standing exactly "where [his] grandfather had stood fifty years before" (D 369). At that point, Blake has also reverted to his family pattern and has come completely into his inheritance. At the moment of his triumph, when Fletcher confronts him in a violent rage, accusing him of having ruined the boy's life out of pure spite, Blake realizes the truth of what separates him from the simple tobacco farmers who are now his neighbors and social equals: "To his superficial unconcern they presented the sincerity of naked passion" (D 329).

If Blake's triumph over Fletcher is in reality his defeat, that defeat can, in turn, be transcended and Blake, cured of his consuming hatred, can be redeemed through love, which turns his self-destructive violence into regenerative hope. The South of the year 1904 could certainly have benefitted from a tragic vision more than from the spirit of optimism which pervades the novel's conclusion. But Glasgow's "evasion" is not, as is the case in Page's Gordon Keith, an escape into conventional romance from the problems the novel has raised throughout its plot.

During the years when Blake carries out his plan for the destruction of Fletcher, Maria, who had chosen a "social marriage" merely to escape the bordedom of rural life, is accompanying her husband on an extended stay in Europe. She returns at the time when Blake has begun to weaken in his devotion to his cause. And she, too, is not the same she was when she left five years earlier. In Europe, where the husband she did not love has died, she learned Gordon Keith's lesson of the vanity of wealth and social position. Like Keith also, she selects the agrarian South as her refuge, to live in closer contact there with nature. Maria, having gone like Tucker Corbin through an abyss of disillusionment and suffering, has also learned to absorb her losses and emerged a truly civilized soul, a female version, in many ways, of Blake's uncle.

Maria has been through the abyss and arrived on that middle ground, has found her "natural self" beneath the self that merely follows society's conventions. She has adopted Corbin's philosophy: What matters are "patience, and charity, and the beauty there is in the simplest and most common lives when they are lived close to Nature" (D 345). But Maria is also more than "just herself;" she has become "an incarnation of vital force" (D 357). Corbin lives his life an accepting and appreciative observer of nature; Maria personifies a natural redemptive power. Corbin is in nature; Maria is of it.

When her grandfather and her brother have become irreconcilably alienated from each other, Maria suddenly finds herself the legal heir to Blake Hall and all its land. She immediately decides to return it to the Blakes. Maria has transcended class consciousness so completely that she has no memory at all of a history of her own. The Hall's age to her "is a reproach," she explains her decision, "for it shows off our newness - our lack of any past that we may call our own" (D 407). In a different novel, this remark, coming as it does from the descendent of generations of forgotten Southern workers, might have been ironic. But Glasgow wanted to convert Blake Hall from an

edifice representing a civilization that had robbed its inhabitants of any sense of emotional immediacy, the artifice that represents their own artificiality, into a symbol of a revived tradition. Appropriately it is Carraway, always sensitive to the value of traditions, who recognizes (in a chapter entitled "Carraway Speaks the Truth") that Maria represents a new generation of Southern nobility: "Was it possible after all, he questioned, that out of the tragic wreck of old claims and old customs which he had witnessed there should spring creatures of even finer fibre than those who had gone before" (D 413)? Maria has no part in either her grandfather's guilt or in the social crimes that had been committed against him and his kind in the past. As a gift from her hands, Blake Hall comes back to Christopher cleansed of all guilt and stain, not as his by right of birth but as an opportunity for a rebirth, a way to transcend his spiritual stasis, and a gift unlooked for, since Blake never sought to recover his place in the Hall but merely to destroy the one who had stolen it from him.

And Blake himself finally comes into his inheritance cleansed of the guilt that later Southern writers would have identified as his true spiritual heritage. Blake had been, as Maria was, guiltless of any crime, but he had by hating Fletcher and setting out to destroy him implicated himself in the very crime he had accused Fletcher of committing. In the night when Will appears at his door and appeals to him for help because he has murdered his grandfather, Christopher catches sight of the portrait of Bolivar Blake, the most famous of his ancestors, and recalls his saying: "I may not sit with the saints, but I shall stand among the gentlemen" (D 533). Blake recognizes that his place is also among the gentlemen, among the defrauders of the innocent in the name of an evasive idealism and an insidious code of honor.

In prison Blake reaches the bottom of the abyss, the deprivation of everything he values and loves. But after his reprieve, he undergoes a symbolic rebirth, awakening in

his mother's bed to find that he still has "the earth with its untold miracles, the sky with its infinity of space, his own soul - and Maria" (D 543). This rebirth signals Blake's arrival on the neutral territory, which is to be free of both halves of the South's divided mind, the nostalgic worship of the past and the idolization of progress.

There is, nevertheless, something oddly familiar about the two civilized souls who await Blake's release from prison together. Tucker Corbin, mature and fulfilled masculinity, and Maria Fletcher, feminine sexual allure closely associated with the land which she bears as a gift for Blake, bear a striking resemblance to the central icons of the romantic plantation myth. In her search for an alternative to the divided mind of her South, Glasgow finally looks not to the future, as Godbold and others have asserted, but to the past, after all the characteristic Southern perspective, to a vision of afflicted mankind finding refuge and nurturing from social ills and backbreaking labor in a rite of passage to the bosom of a virginal landscape embodied as a woman.

Blake, we must assume, will learn to value his work, even though we must also assume that he will no longer have to work quite as hard as before. Glasgow's best advice for "modern man," suffering under the domination by "the means of life," comes in Maria's response to Blake's complaint that it is far easier to commune with nature from the shade of a tree than from behind a mule in the fields. She tells him: "After all, it isn't the way we live nor the work we do that matters . . . but the ideal we put into it" (D 391)). This may be a sound way to avoid the confusions of the self in the marketplace, but it sounds little different from Gordon Keith's search for an "ideal" that will make his pursuit of wealth and success in New York something other than it is. The ideal that can ennoble Blake's planting and ploughing remains elusive. It suggests Hannah Arendt's modern idealization of true "work," which is both psychologically

rewarding and remunerative, as distinguished from necessity compelled and therefore unsatisfying "labor."

Blake's and Maria's future is quite unclear, but it would not be too audacious to claim that the ending of The Deliverance already points toward Glasgow's last novel, published posthumously in 1966. In Beyond Defeat, Asa Timberlake, her last gentleman hero and also her last example of a truly civilized soul, leaves behind his imprisonment in the urbanized and industrialized South and lives out his life in a kind of Jeffersonian dream of agrarian independence. At least the conception that the South can recover or restore itself to its spiritual heritage by an acceptance of the defeat at Appomattox - the "message" of The Deliverance - already implies the territory upon which Asa Timberlake finds his sanctuary in Beyond Defeat. In her attempts to avoid the distortions produced by her romantic, neo-plantationist contemporaries and also by the ideology of a northernized South, seeking salvation through industry and progress, which Southerners had successfully, albeit perversely, amalgamated with their idealized vision of the past, Glasgow took early the road that would lead her later on to the militant agrarians of the 1930's. If Glasgow is then a transitional figure, linking two kinds of Southern writing, she also represents a link between two kinds of Southern agrarians - between those, like Page, who saw in the plantation order the highest fulfillment of Southern civilization, and those, like Tate, who looked toward Jefferson's South.

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